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Genesis 1

1:26

The notion of a court of Heaven is a major Biblical theme. The visions of 1 Kings 22:19-23, Isaiah 6 and Rev. 4 show God seated on a throne with Angels before Him, bringing information and requests to Him and departing with commands to obey; the idea of a council in Heaven is clearly hinted at in Job 1; Gen. 1:26; Ps. 89:7. The Angels are allowed some degree of freedom of initiative in their plans and service of God- and this is a window into how we will eternally be in the Kingdom (Lk. 20:35,36).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

1:28

What happened in Eden was that the garden was planted, Adam was placed in it, and commanded not to eat of the tree of knowledge. The animals are then brought before him for naming; then he is put into a deep sleep, and Eve is created. Then the very first command Adam and Eve jointly received was to have children, and go out into the whole earth (i.e. out of the garden of Eden) and subdue it to themselves (Gen. 1:28). The implication is that this command was given as soon as Eve was created. There he was, lying down, with his wife beside him, " a help meet" ; literally, 'an opposite one'. And they were commanded to produce seed, and then go out of the garden and subdue the earth. It would have been obvious to him from his observation of the animals that his wife was physiologically and emotionally designed for him to produce seed by. She was designed to be his 'opposite one', and there she was, lying next to him. Gen. 2:24 implies that he should have cleaved to her and become one flesh by reason of the very way in which she was created out of him. And yet he evidently did not have intercourse with her, seeing that they failed to produce children until after the fall. If he had consummated his marriage with her, presumably she would have produced children (this deals a death blow to the fantasies of Adam and Eve having an idyllic sexual relationship in Eden before the fall). Paul saw Eve at the time of her temptation as a virgin (2 Cor. 11:2,3). Instead, Adam put off obedience to the command to multiply. There seems an allusion to this in 1 Cor. 7:5, where Paul says that married couples should come together in intercourse " lest Satan (cp. the serpent) tempt you for your incontinency" . Depending how closely one reads Scripture, there may be here the suggestion that Paul saw Adam's mistake in Eden as not 'coming together' with his wife. The lesson is that sins of omission are so easy to commit- perhaps the first sin was one of omission rather than commission?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-10-3What_Happened_In_Eden.htm

Genesis 2

2:2 In Gen. 2:2 when Elohim rested on the seventh day, the implication is that they were tired- language impossible to apply to God Himself. The Hebrew for "rested" does not only mean that He ceased, but that He ceased for a reason. Ex. 31:17 is even clearer- " In six days the LORD made Heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed"- the word used to describe refreshment after physical exhaustion, e. g. regarding David and his men at Bahurim when fleeing from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:14). Notice in passing that the Angels who gave the Law of Moses are often mentioned specifically as instituting the sabbath (e. g. Ex. 31:3; Ez. 20:12,13,16,20)- because it is "the sabbath (the rest) of the Lord" (Lev. 23:3)- i. e. of the Angels who rested on that day back in Genesis. The fact man was to physically rest on the sabbath as a replica of how the Angels "rested" on that day implies that they too physically rested. This is a window into how we will be in the Kingdom, when we will be like the Angels (Lk. 20:35,36).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels1.htm>

On one hand, God can know the future. But it seems to me that so often, He chooses not to, and like us, faces futures which are in some sense unknown. Perhaps this explains God's apparent experimentation to find Adam a "helpmeet" in Gen. 2. This imparts an element of excitement into our relationship with God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Ps. 1,2

The righteous man is like " a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth (in this work of preaching?) shall prosper" (Ps. 1:3). These words are quoted in Rev. 22:2 concerning our holding out of life to the mortal population at the Lord's return. The conclusion? If we witness now we are living the Kingdom life now, and therefore we will be perpetuated in that time. The fact we teach others to do righteousness will therefore be a factor in our acceptance (Mt. 5:19); although not the only one.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

In Ps. 1:1-3, David makes several allusions to Joshua. He speaks of how the man who meditates in God's word day and night will prosper in his ways; and he uses the very same Hebrew words as found in Josh. 1:8 in recounting God's charge to Joshua. But David's point is that the man who does these things will not "walk in the counsel of the ungodly"- he won't give in to peer pressure. The fact that Joshua was wrongly influenced by his peers in later life would indicate that he didn't keep the charge given to him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-9-3Peer_Pressure.htm

Mt. 1,2

The books of the Bible are the work of God through His spirit, rather than the literature of men. This is demonstrated by considering how the New Testament refers to the Old Testament writings.

* Matthew 2:5 (R.V. mg.) speaks of how it was " written through the prophets"

* Matthew 2:15 quotes from Micah, but says: " [that] which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet..." . Hebrews 2:6: " one [actually David] in a certain place testified..." . . There are other examples where the name of the prophet is omitted to show it is not so relevant (Mt. 1:22; 2:23; 21:4).

The human writers of the Bible were therefore relatively unimportant to the early Christians; it was more important that their words were inspired by the spirit of God. God seeks to use us too- but we are but channels through whom He works, like John the Baptist saying [in response to being asked who he was]: "I am a voice..." .

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/4-2-1writers_of_the_bible.htm

Genesis 3

3:15

Intense, urgent presentation of the ultimate issues of life and death, acceptance and rejection, brings forth a massive response. John was hardly polite. He called his baptismal candidates a "generation of vipers", alluding obviously to the seed of the serpent in Gen. 3:15. Yet his tough line with them, his convicting them of sin, led them to ask what precisely they must do, in order to be baptized. They didn't turn away in offence. They somehow sensed he was for real, and the message he preached couldn't be ignored or shrugged off as the ravings of a fanatic. Time and again we see the same- the very height of the demand of Christ of itself convicts men and women of Him. For we were also the seed of the serpent- but we changed over to be in the seed of the woman.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

3:24

The visions of the cherubim and living creatures all seem to have Angelic associations, many of which are detailed elsewhere. One of the clearest is that the cherubim were to keep "the way" to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24), whereas the keeping of the way is later said to be in the control of Angels- e. g. in Gen. 18:19 the Angels decide Abraham will keep "the way of the Lord", implying they were the ones guarding it; and in Ex. 32:8 the Angel talking with Moses on Sinai comments "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" (see too Dt. 9:10,12). The Angels each day and night are crowding around us as it were, willing to keep us in the way to the Kingdom. Let's not be like Balaam!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels3.htm>

Genesis 4

4:9,10

Cain was questioned by God, answered back, and then changed his tune and begged for mercy (Gen. 4:9). Adam likewise began by answering back, blaming the woman and the fact God gave her to him (Gen. 3:12). These incidents were types of the rejection of the unfaithful at the last judgment. They will go through three mood swings: 'Lord, Lord', assuring Him they have never omitted to serve Him (Mt. 25:44), then a more bitter feeling that He is unreasonable (Mt. 25:25), and now a desperate begging for mercy. In the parables of judgment, the Lord asks a series of questions, to which there is no answer. Just as God asked Cain, rhetorically, "Where is your brother?", "What hast thou done?" (Gen. 4:9,10) in order to elicit from him the required self-knowledge. And Adam too: "Where are you...?" (3:9) was surely rhetorical. The real possibility of rejection is something which should make us take spiritual life seriously.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_2.htm

4:16

"Went out" is the language of Judas going out (Jn. 13:30), Cain "went out" (Gen. 4:16), as did Zedekiah in the judgment of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:4; 52:7). Esau went out from the land of Canaan into Edom, slinking away from the face of his brother Jacob, sensing his righteousness and his own carnality (Gen. 36:2-8). Even in this life, those who leave the ecclesia 'go out' after the pattern of Judas, condemning themselves in advance of the judgment by their attitude to the ecclesia (1 Jn. 2:19 cp. Acts 15:24). The unrighteous flee from God now, as they will then (Hos. 7:13). The ungrateful servant "went out" and condemned his brother- thus condemning himself (Mt. 18:28). Yet Peter in this life "went out" from the Lord (Mk. 14:68) and then some minutes later further "went out and wept bitterly" (Lk. 22:62), living out the very figure of rejection at the judgment- and yet was able to repent and come back. In this life we can be judged, condemned, weep...but still repent of it and thereby change our eternal destiny. But at the final judgment: it will be just too late. That 'judgment' will be a detailed statement of the outcome of the ongoing investigative judgment which is going on right now.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_5.htm

Ps. 3-5

The experience of answered prayer is therefore part of the upward spiral of confidence and spirituality experienced by the believer. "What things soever ye desire, believe that ye [did] receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11:24 Gk.) can be read as meaning that we should remember how we received things in the past, and therefore we should have faith that the things we now desire really will be likewise granted. It is for this reason that the prayers recorded in the Psalms constantly look back to previous experiences of answered prayer as a motivation for faith and Hope: Ps. 3:4,5; 44:1-4; 61:5; 63:7; 66:18-20; 77:4-16; 86:13; 94:5,7-19; 116:1; 120:1,2; 126:1,4; 140:6,7. Jeremiah likewise (Lam. 3:55,56). And even the fact other believers had received answers to prayer inspired David's faith in prayer (Ps. 74:11-15; 106).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/11.htm>

Reading through the book of Psalms in one or two sittings reveals another characteristic of David: frequent and intense self-examination, especially while on the run from Saul (Ps. 4:4;

7:3; 17:3; 18:20-24; 19:12; 26:1; 39:1; 59:3; 66:18; 77:6; 86:2; 101:2; 109:3; 139:23,24).
How much time are *we* spending in self-examination? And how piercing is it?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-5Character_Of_David.htm

Mt. 3,4

" Fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3:8)

" Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" must be connected with our Lord's description of the Gentile believers as " a nation bringing forth the (vineyard) fruits" of the Kingdom (Mt. 21:43). These are defined in Rom. 14:17: " The Kingdom of God is...righteousness, and peace, and joy" . Christ's parable of the vine in Jn. 15 explains that it is the word abiding in us which brings forth fruit. Bringing forth fruit is therefore a way of life (cp. Rom. 6:21,22). In each aspect in which we 'bear fruit', we have in a sense 'repented'. Our repentance and fruit-bearing is not something which we can set time limits on within this life. Christ would have been satisfied if Israel had borne at least some immature fruit (Lk. 13:7). Only when there is no fruit at all, in any aspect of spiritual life, will Christ reject us. Some will bear more fruit than others- some sixty, some an hundredfold. Mt. 3:8 connects repentance with fruit bearing. This shows that God may recognize degrees of repentance and response to His word, as He recognizes degrees of fruit bearing. It is far too simplistic for us to label some of our brethren as having repented and others as being totally unrepentant. In any case, the fruits of repentance are brought forth unto God, not necessarily to fellow believers (Rom. 7:4). There is a marked dearth of evidence to show that a believer must prove his repentance in outward terms before his brethren can accept him.

" Works meet for repentance"

Men " should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:18-20). As with Mt. 21:28-31, this refers primarily to baptism. " Repent and turn to God" surely matches " Repent and be baptized" in Acts 2:38. Turning to God is associated with baptism in Acts 9:35; 11:21; 15:19; 1 Thess. 1:9.

Following conversion, our works should match the profession of faith we have made. But there is no proof here for the equation 'Forgiveness = repentance + forsaking'. The " works" seem to refer to positive achievement rather than undoing the results of past failures. Works meet for repentance are fruits of repentance (Mt. 3:8 cp. Lk. 3:8). We have shown that there are different degrees of fruit/ repentance which God accepts, and that this fruit is brought forth to God, and that its development takes time. We cannot therefore disfellowship a believer for not bringing forth fruit in one aspect of his life. At least we should be able to tolerate ecclesias who are willing to tolerate slow development of fruit in some of their members.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-3-7Works_Meet_For_Repentance.htm

Genesis 5,6

The conditions prior to the flood are a type of our last days (Mt. 24:37). The earth being filled with violence (Gen. 6:11) needs little comment. Note how this verse is quoted in Ez. 8:17 about the land (same word as " earth") of Israel being filled with violence. Similarly Gen. 6:13 is alluded to in Ez. 7:2,3,6. The " giants" of Gen.6:4 comes from a Hebrew root meaning 'hackers or assailants'- implying arrogant gangs strutting round assailing people at will. Job. 22:15-17 R.V. gives the same impression. Compare this with the gang warfare and intimidation of the Americas and many countries.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/1.htm>

The rainbow is to remind men of the essential salvation and patience of God. And yet He describes it as reminding Him of His promise of salvation (Gen. 6:9)- as if He might forget. Yet this figure surely indicates the humility of God- actually the rainbow is for *our* benefit not His, yet He puts it this way. If God is in a way humble- how much more should we be.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Ps. 6-8

The experience of answered prayer is a strong confirmation that we are on the right track to the Kingdom. Prayer is spoken of as entering before the judgment throne of God, as if the prayer is a symbol of the one offering it, and is judged by God enthroned in glory, and then a sentence / judgment is passed by God which the Angels operationalize (Ps. 7:6; 17:2; 35:23; 54:1,2; 109:7; 143:1,2).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/11.htm>

The Lord shall judge the people...God judgeth (present tense) the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day...he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows" (Ps. 7:8,11-13). God is now judging men, and preparing their final reward. For the wicked, the arrow is prepared in the bow, the sword is sharpened- all waiting for the final day in which the present judgments will be executed. Again, note how that the last day is not for gathering information, but for giving the result of present behaviour. The judgment process is ongoing, in that God right now (even while we sleep) is trying and judging our ways and motives (Job 7:18; Ps. 11:4; 17:3; 26:2; 139:23). He now weighs up the path / overall direction of our lives and will later openly show His judgments (Is. 26:7-9).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

Mt. 5

If we examine / judge / condemn ourselves now in our self-examination, God will not have to do this to us at the day of judgment. If we cast away our own bodies now, the Lord will not need to cast us away in rejection (Mt. 5:30).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Genesis 7,8

It can be that we accept God's existence without really believing that He is, therefore, all powerful, and that all His attributes which the Bible reveals are actually functional and real for us today. The unfaithful captain of 2 Kings 7:2 mocked Elisha: " If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" . He forgot that there are windows in Heaven (Gen. 7:11; Mal. 3:10) through which blessing can be given. He believed in God's existence. But he didn't think this God could do much, and he doubted whether He would ever practically intervene in human affairs. We must be aware of this same tendency.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-1Practicing_The_Presence_Of_God.htm

The Hebrew word translated "grieved" also occurs, about Noah, in Gen. 8:10: " And he stayed [s.w. to be grieved, hurt] yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark" . This word is found translated in other places like this: " Be in anguish" (Dt. 2:25); " wounded" (1 Sam. 31:3); " exceedingly grieved" (Es. 4:4); " travaileth" (Job 15:20); " wounded" (1 Chron. 10:3); " sore pained within me" (Ps. 55:4); " I am pained at my heart" (Jer. 4:19); it is several times used of a woman " in pain" , " travailing" in expectancy of the birth (Is. 26:17,18; 54:1; 66:7; Mic. 4:10). Why was Noah grieved and distressed, as he waited seven days before sending the dove out again? Surely for the plight of his world. He was hoping the dove would return with some sign of civilization, some hint of human survival. His grief was for the corpses floating, for the animals lost...for the world that once was. He had preached to them for 120 years, and they hadn't listened. Yet he didn't think Well that's their problem, they didn't want to hear when they could, it serves them right. And neither does it seem he was looking out of the ark window thinking My, I'm sure glad we were obedient.

As the rain came down, it seems to me that the practical reality of the tragedy would have dawned upon Noah; as the waters rose, he would have pictured the folk he knew running to ever higher hills he would have seen the faces of local children, maybe those of the guys he bought wood from, faces of the women his wife had bartered with, memories of his own brothers and sisters, perhaps his other children. It seems to me that he spent all that time in the ark grieving, grieving, grieving for the tragedy of it all. He surely wasn't smugly thinking Ha, serves them right, and praise God, I'm saved, and there's a great future Kingdom for me in store!. I also muse- and no more than this- that perhaps he went on a bender on coming out of the ark because he just couldn't handle the tragedy of it all. Walking around an empty earth knowing he was saved and the others hadn't made it...

And this all has vital, biting relevance to us. For Peter takes Noah in the ark as a symbol of us all in Christ. Yes, he was there thanking God for His gracious salvation, looking forward to the new world to come, but distraught at the tragedy of those masses who hadn't responded, and who had died the slow, desperate, struggling death of drowning. He sent out the dove to see if the waters were " abated" - but the Hebrew word is usually translated " curse" ; he wanted to know if the curse was still evident; if the waters were cursed in the presence of the ground / earth. The same word is found in Gen. 8:21 " I will not again curse the ground" (3). If our concern for this world is genuine, if our preaching is not just seeking to gain members, or prove ourselves right and others wrong, then we will grieve for this world; even though the exclusion of some from Gods salvation is in some way their fault. Those who reject our message we will grieve and bleed for; not just shrug our shoulders over. Lack of response should concern us, worry us, drive us to think of how we could be the more persuasive of men.

Jeremiah

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

Ps. 9,10

The fire of the final judgment will reveal the dross of our lives to us and in this sense purge us of those sins. Without the judgment, we would drift into the Kingdom with no real appreciation of our own sinfulness or the height of God's grace. The judgment will declare God's glory, His triumph over every secret sin of His people. The heathen will be judged "that the nations may know themselves to be but men" (Ps. 9:20)- self knowledge is the aim, not extraction of information so that God can make a decision.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_1.htm

For the righteous, our acceptability before God now is related to our acceptability with him at judgment day. Our good works are manifest before we reach the judgment, which will manifest them again (1 Tim. 5:25). Thus David reflected on the experiences of his life: "Thou hast made my judgment; thou satest in the throne judging right...and he shall judge the world (at the second coming, through Christ, Acts 17:11) in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Ps. 9:4,8 A.V.mg.). This shows the continuity between God's attitude to him in his mortal life, and God's attitude at the coming judgment. If Christ is glorified by us now, we will glorify Him in that day (2 Thess. 1:10,12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_5.htm

Mt. 6

There's an allusion to Mt. 6 in James 2:2: "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten". Note the present tenses: "are corrupted...are moth eaten". The unlikelihood that they walked around in literally moth eaten clothes or that their gold was literally corrupted indicates that James meant that they were like this in the sight of God. This provides an interesting key to Mt.6:19-21, to which there is a clear allusion: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt..but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven...for their will your heart be also". Thus James read the moth and rust corrupting as being in God's sight- if a man's heart is set on earthly things, God looks ahead to the distant day when those possessions have decayed, perhaps after the person's death, and as they are then, so God considers them to be in this present life. The emphasis in Mt.6 is on where the heart is- which precisely agrees with the context of James. Our mind is able to see our material possessions in a similar light to how God does.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/James_5.html

Jan. 5

Gen. 9,10

God set the rainbow in the sky so that whenever He looks upon it, He will remember His covenant with man (Gen. 9:16). The pronouns seem wrong; we would expect to read that the rainbow is so that whenever we look upon it, we remember... but no. God condescends to man to such an extent that He invites us to understand that whenever we remember the covenant with Him, He does likewise. This experience of an acceptive mutuality between

God and man is surely at the very core of our spirituality; it should be part of an inner spiritual shell that nothing, nothing can shake: aggression from our brethren, disillusion with other Christians, persecution from the world, painful personal relationships.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-3Mutuality_Between_God_And_Man.htm

By reason of the image they bear, we are to act to all men as we would to God Himself; we are not to treat some men as we would animals, who are not in the image of God. Because we are made in God's image, we should therefore not kill other humans (Gen. 9:6). James says the same, in essence, in teaching that because we are in God's image, we shouldn't curse others. To curse a man is to kill him. That's the point of James' allusion to Genesis and to God as creator. Quite simply, respect for the person of others is inculcated by sustained reflection on the way that they too are created in God's image.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3God_As_Creator.htm

Ps. 11-13

God's face looks at the righteous if He accepts them (Ps. 11:7; 13:1)- and God turning His face toward men is a very common idiom for Him answering prayer (e.g. 1 Sam. 1:11). Thus acceptability with God and Him answering our prayers are related.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

In many verses in the Psalms, David expresses his understanding that God's temple is in Heaven (e.g. Ps. 11:4); both David and Solomon recognized that God cannot be confined to a physical house, seeing that even the heavens cannot contain Him (2 Chron.6:18). The fact David became obsessed with building a physical house for God perhaps indicates that his better spiritual judgment was later clouded by human obsession- as can happen to us in so many ways.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-2Solomon_And_The_Temple.htm

Mt. 7

The Lord's teaching about judging does not in fact say that the act of condemning our brother is in itself a sin- it's simply that we must cast out the beam from our own eye first, and then we can judge our brother by pointing out to him the splinter in his eye. But the Lord tells us not to judge because He foresaw that we would never completely throw out the beam from our own eye. His command not to judge / condemn at all was therefore in this sense a concession to our inevitable weakness (Mt. 7:1-5).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-2Living_On_Different_Levels.htm

Jan. 6

Gen. 11,12

Three times in this record (Gen. 11:3,4 and 7) we read the phrase, " Go to" in the contexts of the men 'going to' in the building, and of God 'going to' in His dramatic intervention. It cannot be coincidence that this rare idiom occurs twice close together in James 4:13; 5:1. The context there is of warning believers not to build their own 'Babels' of wealth and monuments to human achievement, seeing that they would be suddenly destroyed by the Lord's coming. This in itself points to a latter-day application of this Genesis record - indicating that weak believers will get caught up in the latter day Nimrod's unity movement, and will benefit from it materially?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/2.htm>

Heb. 11:8 (Gk.) implies that as soon as God called Abram, he got up and left Ur. But a closer examination of the record indicates that this wasn't absolutely the case. It is stressed that both Abram and Sarai left Ur because " Terah took Abram his son...and Sarai his daughter in law" (Gen. 11:31). Abram had been called to leave Ur and go into Canaan. But instead he followed his father to Haran, and lived there (for some years, it seems) until his father died, and then he responded to his earlier call to journey towards Canaan. The Genesis record certainly reads as if Abram was dominated by his father and family, and this militated against an immediate response to the call he received to leave Ur and journey to Canaan. At best his father's decision enabled him to obey the command to leave Ur without having to break with his family. And yet, according to Heb. 11:8, Abram immediately responded, as an act of faith. Surely this is an example of righteousness being imputed to Abraham, as it is to us- and to our weak brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-3-1Christian_Hypocrisy.htm

Ps. 14-16

Both David and Jesus had a real sense of direction, they could see that their mental, emotional and physical sufferings were leading them towards an altogether higher relationship with the Father. They took those sufferings as an almost welcome push towards the Father. They had a sure sense of spiritual direction in all their afflictions; this accounts for the human loneliness which they both felt. David felt that no one else understood (Ps. 14:2, a wilderness psalm) or was really seeking towards God as he was doing (Ps. 27:4,8). The Hebrew for " understand" here is that translated " wise" concerning David in 1 Sam. 18.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-3-2David_And_Saul.htm

True understanding is a seeking for God, a doing good; hence those who sin have no true knowledge as they ought to have, whatever their theoretical understanding (Ps. 14:2-4). But we can nominally believe the Gospel, 'understand' it in an intellectual sense, and bring forth no fruit to perfection (Mt. 13:15 cp. 23)- not perceiving the power of the Gospel.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/1-3power_of_the_gospel.htm

Mt. 8

Either we will mourn now in repentance (Lk. 6:25; the Greek for " mourn" is often in a repentance context), or we will mourn at the judgment (Mt. 8:12 etc.). With this logic- let us repent in this life rather than when it's too late.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-9The_Logic_Of_Endurance.htm

Jan. 7

Gen. 13,14

Because the promises were to be made to Abram and not Lot, this separation was indeed necessary (although nothing should be inferred from this regarding Lot's spirituality or standing with God). It is stressed in the record that " Lot went with him" out of Haran (Gen.12:4), and that in Abram's subsequent passing through the land of Canaan, " Lot...went with Abram" (Gen.13:5; 13:1). Having been through so much together (they were together in the Egypt crisis, Gen.13:1), it is unlikely that they would suffer from a personality clash. Yet the great wealth of them both resulted in " strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle" (Gen.13:7). Abram reasoned that it would be a shame to let this incident between their employees drive a wedge between them personally; " for we be brethren" (note Abram's intense awareness that they were of the same household), and close spiritual friends too, it may be inferred (Gen.19:8). Abram's subsequent concern for Lot indicates that they did not fall out personally over the problem- an example to us, when external pressures threaten to break us apart from our brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-2-2call_of_abram.htm

Abraham wavered at times. The reference to Abram pitching his tent between Bethel [‘the house of God’] and Hai [‘the house of ruin’] could imply that he was caught between the two- his faith was not firmly decided (Gen. 13:3). Yet he was counted righteous.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-3-1Moments_Of_Faith.htm

Ps. 17

Coming before the throne of God in prayer (Heb. 9:24; Ps. 17:1,2) is the language of the judgment seat. If we become before His throne and are accepted, it follows that this is a foretaste of the outcome of the judgment for us, were we to be judged at that time. The Kingdom prophecy that " Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Is. 65:24) is applied to us now (Mt. 6:8)- as if answered prayer is a foretaste of the Kingdom life. In the grace of Christ, we can have a certain " boldness" in prayer (Heb. 4:16); but we will have " boldness in the day of judgment" (1 Jn. 4:17) in the sense that the attitude we have in prayer now and the experience of the Lord we know now will be that we have in the day of judgment. If He is no more than a black box in our brain we call 'God' or 'Jesus', if for all our Christianity we haven't known Him, so it will be then as we face Him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/5.htm>

We should come to sense a mutuality in prayer between us and the Father. God is attentive to our words in prayer (Ps. 17:1; Neh. 1:6) as we attend to His words (Prov. 4:1,20 s.w.).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-9how_to_improve_prayer.htm

Mt. 9 Christ's preachers were like harvesters working in the very last hour to bring in the harvest- in fact, the harvest was spoiling because it's not being fully gathered. The fault for

that lies with the weak efforts of the preacher-workers (Mt. 9:37). This shows how God lets Himself be limited by our preaching.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/20-3urgent_response_to_the_gospel.htm

Jan. 8

Gen. 15,16

Abraham's appreciation of the promises relating to the Christ-seed also grew over time. When the promise was first given, he seems to have assumed it referred to his adopted son, Lot. Thus Abraham offered Lot the land which had been promised to Abraham's seed (Gen. 12:7 cp. chapter 13). But after Lot returned to Sodom, Abraham looked to his servant Eliezer as his heir / seed (Gen. 15:2,3). Thus God corrected him, in pointing out that the seed would be from Abraham's own body (15:4). And so Abraham thought of Ishmael, who was a son from his own body (although Yahweh didn't specify who the mother would be). When Abraham's body became dead, i.e. impotent, he must have surely concluded that Ishmael was the son promised. But again, Abraham was told that no, Ishmael was not to be the seed; and finally God told Abraham that Sarah would have a child. Their faith was encouraged by the incidents in Egypt which occurred straight after this, whereby Abraham prayed for Abimelech's wives and slaves so that they might have children- and he was heard. Finally, Isaac was born. It was clear that this was to be the seed. But that wasn't all. Abraham in his final and finest spiritual maturity came to the understanding that the seed was ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in wondrous appreciation of the Saviour seed and the way of forgiveness enabled through Him. If Abraham's faith and understanding grew throughout his life- what about ours?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-4-2Jacob_And_Jesus.htm

Faith is perfected / matured by the process of works (James 2:22,23). The works, the upward spiral of a life lived on the basis of faith, develop the initial belief in practice. Thus Abraham believed God in Gen. 15, but the works of Gen. 22 [offering Isaac] made that faith "perfect".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm

Ps. 18

The ecclesias, groups of believers, are lampstands (Rev. 2:5 cp. Ps. 18:28). We must give forth the light, not keep it under a bucket, letting laziness (under a bed) or worldly care (a bushel) distract us; because "there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad" (Mk. 4:21,22). In other words, the very reason why God has hidden the things of His word from the world and some aspects of them from our brethren, is so that we can reveal them to them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment6_1.htm

Pride is somehow ingrained in the very fibres of our nature. And yet even human observation has concluded that the sign of true greatness is in humility. The greatest exhortation to humility is surely in reflection on the humility of God, His humbling of Himself from His physical and moral heights in order to reach out into our tiny lives, and bring us eventually to

the heights of His nature. David recognized this when he spoke of God's salvation: " with thy meekness thou hast multiplied me" (Ps. 18:35 AV mg.); and elsewhere he realizes that the majestic highness of Yahweh is because He humbles Himself to behold the things in Heaven (the Angelic system) and on the earth (Ps. 113:4-6). Our efforts to upbuild each other, our outreach into the world, should all be reflecting this same humble devotion.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Mt. 10

A careful reading of Mt. 10:16-39 reveals many links with the Olivet prophecies concerning the latter day persecution of the saints; verses 17-21 are effectively quoted in Lk. 21:12-18. However, Mt. 10:16 prefaces all this by saying that these tribulations will attend those who go out preaching the Gospel in that latter day period. At this time, when many " shall be offended" (spiritually stumble) and " the love of many shall wax cold" for the truth (Mt. 24:10,11), the " Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mt. 24:14)- i.e. the full establishment of the Kingdom. At that time, " What ye hear in the ear (in quiet halls at the moment), that preach ye (then) upon the housetops" (Mt. 10:27). This seems to be giving special encouragement to persevere in preaching during the last days. There is a connection here with Mt. 24:17, which advises those upon the housetops to go with Christ at the time of his coming. This implies that at the moment of Christ's coming there will be zealous " upon the housetops" preaching by the faithful. And when the number of the elect is made up, then the Lord comes. The Lord is to remain at the Father's right hand until all His enemies are placed under His feet- and those enemies are those who are the unconverted (Mt. 22:44; Eph. 2:12,16,17; 4:18; Col. 1:21).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/18.htm>

Jan. 9

Gen. 17,18

" The uncircumcised...that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Gen. 17:14). We either " cut off" the flesh, or God will cut us off. He who would not accept Jesus as Messiah in Messiah were to be "destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:25), using a very similar phrase to the LXX of Gen. 17:14, where the uncircumcised man was to be "cut off from his people". That's the logic of cutting off the flesh now- for it will be done in the condemnation of the final judgment for those who don't do it now.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-3The_New_Creation.html

The everlasting, Abrahamic covenant extended to all generations of Abraham's seed (Gen. 17:7-9). The fact Israel were forbidden to marry Gentiles was not only a type of how the new Israel should not marry unbelievers; we are in essence in their position. We are the Israel of God, not just their antitype. We too have been chosen, we too share the same fathers, and the covenant made to them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-9Marriage_Out_Of_The_Faith.htm

Ps. 19-21

David went so far down the road of self-examination that the sin with Bathsheba made him realize that it was probably associated with many others which he did not even realize: " Who can understand his own errors? cleanse (s.w. Ps. 51:1,2 re. the Bathsheba affair) thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12). If our own self-examination and repentance is after the pattern of David's, we will appreciate how that each of our sins is associated with so many others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-3Davids_Sin_With_Bathsheba.htm

Having spoken of the vital need for preachers, Paul quotes Old Testament prophecies concerning the preaching of the Gospel: " Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18). Paul is doubtless alluding to the great commission here. But he says that it is fulfilled by the preachers spoken of in Ps. 19:1-4, which he quotes. This speaks of the " heavens" declaring God's gospel world-wide. In the same way as the sun 'goes forth' all over the world, so will the " heavens" go forth to declare the Gospel. The 'heavens' do not just refer to the twelve in the first century; the New Testament says that all in Christ are the " heavenlies" ; we are all part of the " sun of righteousness" . The arising of Christ as the sun at His second coming (Mal. 4:2) will be heralded by the church witnessing the Gospel of His coming beforehand. The enthusiast will note a number of other preaching allusions in Ps. 19: " The firmament sheweth his handiwork" (v.1) uses a word (in the Septuagint) which occurs in Lk. 9:60 concerning the publishing of the Gospel. " Their line is gone out through all the earth" (v.4) is picked up by Paul in describing his preaching (2 Cor. 10:13-16 AVmg.). The idea of 'going out' throughout the earth was clearly at the root of Christ's great commission (Mk. 16:15). Yet, as we have said, the " heavens" to which this refers in Ps. 19 are interpreted by the New Testament as referring to all believers in Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/5-2great_commission.htm

Mt. 11

If Israel would receive it, John the Baptist was the Elijah prophet. The course of fulfilment of prophecy was conditional upon whether John succeeded in turning the hearts of Israel back to the fathers or not; on preparing them for the great and terrible day of the Lord. Brethren as varied as John Knowles and Harry Whittaker have all recognized in their expositions that the Kingdom could have come in the 1st century had Israel received John as Elijah. But they would not. And so another Elijah prophet is to come in the last days and prepare Israel for her Messiah. "If ye are willing to receive him, this is Elijah which is to come" (Mt. 11:14 RVmg.) says it all. The Elijah prophet who was to herald the Messianic Kingdom could have been John the baptist- if Israel had received him. But they didn't, and so the prophecy went down another avenue of fulfilment. This shows how God's purpose is so open-ended, depending upon our response.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

Jan. 10

Gen. 19

Gen. 19:14 RVmg. brings out the likely immediate background to her decision. Lot's sons in law "were to marry" his daughters. The Lord too perceived that they were marrying and giving in marriage the very day the flood came, and He pointed out the similarities with the Sodom situation (Lk. 17:27-29). Could it not be that the very day of the double wedding, they had to leave? With all the build up to the wedding, Lot and his wife would so wanted to have stayed just another day to see the wedding of their two daughters. It is to the girls credit that they both left. But Lot's wife had invested so much in it emotionally that she just had to look back. And we are to remember her by way of warning.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/3-1lot_in_sodom.htm

braham prayed for the city of Sodom to be saved for the sake of ten righteous who might be there (Gen. 19:24). He didn't specifically mention what was his heart's desire- that Lot be saved. But God discerned the spirit of his prayer, and saved Lot, even though Abraham 'knew not what to pray for' and asked for the 'wrong' thing in order to obtain what he really wanted, i.e. the salvation of Lot. So even when we know not how to pray, we worry we can't frame the words right, we can be assured that God hears the essence of what we desire.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Ps. 22

A study of Psalm 22 indicates deeper reasons why Christ felt forsaken. He had been crying out loud for deliverance, presumably for some time, according to Ps. 22:1-6, both during and before the unnatural three hour darkness. He felt that His desire for deliverance was not being heard, although the prayers of others had been heard in the past when they cried with a like intensity. The Lord Jesus was well aware of the connection between God's refusal to answer prayer and His recognition of sin in the person praying (2 Sam. 22:42 = Ps. 2:2-5). It is emphasized time and again that God will not forsake those who love Him (e.g. Dt. 4:31; 31:6; 1 Sam. 12:22; 1 Kings 6:13; Ps. 94:14; Is. 41:17; 42:16). Every one of these passages must have been well known to our Lord, the word made flesh. He knew that God forsaking Israel was a punishment for their sin (Jud. 6:13; 2 Kings 21:14; Is. 2:6; Jer. 23:33). God would forsake Israel only if they forsook Him (Dt. 31:16,17; 2 Chron. 15:2). So it seems that Jesus *felt* like a sinner, He panicked that He had sinned- but of course He had not. Thus He knows how we feel as sinners, although in reality He never sinned.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-11Why_Forsaken_Me.htm

The passion of the Lord's intercessions on the cross is matchless. He roared to God in His prayer, regardless of whether there was light or darkness (Ps. 22:1,2). He reflected there that His prayer was offered to God " in an acceptable time" (Ps. 69:13). And yet this very passage is taken up in 2 Cor. 6:2 concerning the necessary vigour of our crying to God for salvation. That the intensity of the Lord's prayerfulness and seeking of God on the cross should be held up as our pattern: the very height of the ideal is wondrous.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-7Father_Forgive_Them.htm

Mt. 12

If we do not discern the body at the breaking of bread, if we wilfully exclude certain members of the body, then we eat and drink condemnation to ourselves. This is how serious division is. The devil's house is divided (Mt. 12:25,26); Christ is not divided (1 Cor. 1:13 s.w.).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

Jan. 13

Gen. 24

here was a definite trait of energy and industrious activity amongst the Abraham family, indicated by the record of Rebekah running to respond to the call of Eleazer to marry Isaac (Gen.24:18,20,28,58). Laban too was spritely (Gen.24:29). And Abraham as an old boy ran to meet the Angels, he hastened into the tent, and personally ran unto the herd rather than wave his wand at the servants (or the wife) to do it (Gen.18:2,6,7). The way in which it is stressed that he got up early in the morning gives the same impression (19:27; 20:8; 21:14; 22:3; the same is said of Jacob, 28:18 and Laban, 31:55).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-1The_Abraham_Family.htm

It must be significant that Abraham told Eliezer to take Isaac a wife from " my country...my kindred...thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell" (Gen.24:3,4). It follows that there were none of Abraham's country or kindred, which he had been commanded to leave, living anywhere near him. He had truly and fully obeyed the command to separate from them! As with many youngsters living in isolation in the mission fields, the avoidance of marrying those in the surrounding world just seemed too much to ask. But Abraham knew that a way would be made: " The Lord God of Heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred...he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son" (Gen.24:7). As God had taken Abram from Ur and Haran and Lot, so God would take a woman from there, suitable for Isaac.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-2-2call_of_abram.htm

Ps. 29,30

God's word or thinking is God: "the word was God". Because of this, there is a very close association between God and His word: parallelisms like Ps. 29:8 are common: "The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness" (cf. Ps. 56:4; 130:5). Statements like "You have not hearkened unto Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. 25:7) are common in the prophets. Our attitude to God's word is our attitude to God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/7-4.htm>

David's spiritual self-confidence changed radically after his Bathsheba experience. He could look back and reflect how "As for me, I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved" (Ps. 30:6), perhaps looking back to Ps. 26:10, where he had felt confident his foot had never been moved. And he speaks of how he only stands strong because of God's gracious favour (Ps. 30:7). God works through sin and failure- to bring us to know His grace. We follow the same learning curve as David, if we are truly God's man or woman.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-1David_Our_Example.htm

Mt. 15

The disciples were ordinary Jews who weren't such righteous men; they didn't wash before a meal, and the Pharisees criticized them. The Lord explained why this wasn't so important; but the disciples still didn't understand. And yet He justifies them to the Pharisees as if they did understand, and as if their non-observance of ritual washing was because of their great spiritual perception (Mt. 15:2,15,16). Surely the Lord imputed a righteousness to them which was not their own. Jesus had asked the disciples to be obedient to every jot and tittle of the teaching of the Scribes, because they "sit in Moses' seat". And yet when they are criticized for not doing what He'd asked them to do, for not washing hands before a meal, the Lord Jesus vigorously defends them by criticizing their critics as hypocrites (Mk. 7:2-8). Indeed, the Lord's passion and anger with the critics comes out very clearly in the subsequent record of the incident; and it is the essence of that passion which He has for us in mediating for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-7Disciples_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

Jan. 14

Gen. 25,26

" Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Gen. 25:28). The AVmg. seems to bring out Isaac's superficiality: " Isaac loved Esau, because venison was in his mouth" . This seems to connect with the way Esau threw away his birthright for the sake of food in his mouth. Esau was evidently of the flesh, whilst Jacob had at least some potential spirituality. Yet Isaac preferred Esau. He chose to live in Gerar (Gen. 26:6), right on the border of Egypt- as close as he could get to the world, without crossing the line. And he thought nothing of denying his marriage to Rebekah, just to save his own skin (Gen. 26:7). So it seems Isaac had some marriage problems; the record speaks of " Esau his son" and " Jacob (Rebekah's) son" (Gen. 27:5,6). The way Jacob gave Isaac wine " and he drank" just before giving the blessings is another hint at some unspirituality (Gen. 27:25). Isaac seems not to have accepted the Divine prophecy concerning his sons: " the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23), seeing that it was his intention to give Esau the blessings of the firstborn, and thinking that he was speaking to Esau, he gave him the blessing of his younger brothers (i.e. Jacob) serving him (Gen. 27:29 cp. 15). And yet, and this is my point, Isaac's blessing of the two boys is described as an act of faith; even though it was only one of his passing moments of faith and was done with an element of disbelief in God's word of prophecy concerning the elder serving the younger, and perhaps under the influence of alcohol. Yet according to Heb. 11:20, this blessing was done with faith; at that very point in time, Isaac had faith. So God's piercing eye saw through the haze of alcohol, through Isaac's

liking for the good life, through Isaac's unspiritual liking for Esau, through his marriage problem, through his lack of faith that the elder must serve the younger, and discerned that there was some faith in that man Isaac; and then holds this up as a stimulant for our faith, centuries later! Not only should we be exhorted to see the good side in our present brethren; but we can take comfort that this God is our God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-3-1Moments_Of_Faith.htm

The younger son in the parable was more than rude in demanding his actual share of the inheritance immediately. He was effectively wishing that his father was dead. He had the neck to treat his lovely father as if he were already dead. There arose in Europe after the second world war the 'Death of God' philosophy and theology. We may distance ourselves from it in disgust, finding even the words grating and inappropriate, but let's remember that the younger son ends up the son who is found in the end abiding in the Father's house and joyful fellowship. This is how we have treated our wonderful Father. We know from the examples of Abraham (Gen. 25:5-8) and Jacob (Gen. 48-49) that the actual division of the inheritance was made by the father as his death approached. For the son to take the initiative was disgusting. Although the sons could have some legal right to what their father gave them before his death, they were strictly denied the right of actually having it in possession [i.e. the right of disposition]. This awful son was therefore each of us. And the father responds with an unreal grace. He agrees. He did what he surely knew was not really for the spiritual good of the son.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a2-5The_Elder_Brother.htm

Ps. 31

David's family appear to have later disowned him during Saul's persecution (Ps. 31:11), fleeing from him, as the Lord's friends also did (Ps. 31:11 = Mt. 26:56).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-1David_And_Goliath.htm

It has been commented that the Lord's last words are prophesied in the Psalms: " Into thy hands I commit my spirit" , and that the Psalm goes on to say: " Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth" (Ps. 31:5), suggesting that these were the very first thoughts of the Lord on resurrection. If this is so, then there was a strong awareness in Him that Yahweh was the " God of truth" . This is a title associated with the promises; in which case, His first awareness on resurrection would have been that the Father had faithfully fulfilled His promises to Abraham and David in raising Him. Such was the place which the promises had in the Lord's awareness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Mt. 16

The idea of the essence of judgment going on now is brought out by a sensitive comparison of the Gospel records. Mt. 16:26 records the Lord as teaching: "What will it profit a man [i.e. at the future judgment], if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?". Mk. 8:36 has:

“What does it [right now] profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”. Could it be that the Lord said both these things at the same time- to make His point, that the essence of judgment day is being decided right now by our decisions today? And the Lord’s next words make the same point: “What shall [at judgment day] a man give in return for his life?” (Mt. 16:26) is matched by Mk. 8:37: “What can [right now] a man give in return for his life?”. The question we will face at judgment day, the obvious issue between winning for a moment and losing eternally, or losing now and winning eternally... this is being worked out right now. The choice is ours, hour by hour, decision by decision.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

Jan. 15

Gen. 27

The record stresses how righteousness was imputed to Jacob. Esau before Isaac, pleading with him to change his irrevocable rejection, is picked up in Heb. 12:14-16 as a type of the rejected at the day of judgment. The implication is that Jacob at this time symbolized the saints; yet he was no saint at that time. The way he is described at the time as "smooth" (27:11), without a covering of hair, may be a hint that he needed a covering of atonement. He didn't even accept Yahweh as his God; and anyone who would justify lying to his father as Jacob then did has rejected the whole concept of living by any kind of principles. Yet Jacob at this time is set up as a saint. At this time, the record of Isaac's blessing of Jacob (27:29) is framed to portray Jacob as a type of Christ: "Let people serve thee" = Zech. 8:23; Is. 60:12 "nations bow down to thee" = Ps. 72:11; "Be Lord over thy brethren" = Phil. 2:11; "Let thy mother's sons bow down to thee" = 1 Cor. 15:7. The fact Esau mocked Jacob as he skulked off to Padan Aram is picked up in Obadiah 12 as a ground for Esau's condemnation; and yet, humanly, Jacob was at that time by far the bigger and more responsible sinner. A bit of mocking from Esau was, from a human standpoint, a mild response.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-6Jacob_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

Admittedly the idea of anger flaring up in God’s face and then Him ‘turning’ from that wrath is some sort of anthropomorphism. The very same words are used about Esau’s wrath ‘turning away’, i.e. being pacified, as are used about the pacification of God’s wrath (Gen. 27:45). But all the same, this language must be telling us something. Sin is serious. God knows anger. We can provoke Him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-23.htm>

Ps. 32

The nervous effects on David may well have continued throughout the rest of his life. Despite exalting in the fact that he has now confessed his sin and been forgiven, David uttered Ps. 32:4: "Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me (in the days before repentance): my moisture is (present tense) turned into the drought of summer. Selah" . Is this not an eloquent picture of the David who was once so sure of himself, full of vitality, now shrivelled up, at least emotionally? "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about" (Ps.32:10) may also give insight here. It does not say 'Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but the repentant will have joy'. Instead, the contrast is made

between sorrow and experiencing God's mercy; as if to imply 'The sorrows brought about by sin will go on and on in this life, but knowing you are surrounded by God's mercy more than compensates'. It takes little imagination to realize how that after his sin, David must have become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, tortured with deep and manic depressions. David's repentance comes as a relief to the reader.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-4Davids_Repentance.htm

Morally disgraced in the eyes of all Israel and even the surrounding nations, not to mention his own family, David didn't have a leg to stand on when it came to telling other people how to live their lives. A lesser man than David would have resigned all connection with any kind of preaching. But throughout the Bathsheba psalms there is constant reference to David's desire to go and share the grace of God which he had experienced with others (Ps. 32 title; 51:13). He titles them 'maschil' - for instruction / teaching. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord...that I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates" (Ps. 9:13,14). If we have known forgiveness, then this will be the motivation for our preaching; and our witness will have a compelling humility about it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

Mt. 17

Acting as Jesus would act is really the whole key to not giving offence / causing others to stumble. He above all valued the human person to an extent no other human being has ever reached. When asked to pay the temple tax, which apparently few people paid in Galilee at that time, the Lord did so "lest we should offend them" - even though, as He explained to Peter, He was exempted from it, as the Son in His Father's house (Mt. 17:27). He could have appealed to higher principle. But the Lord was worried that somehow He might make these apparently mercenary, conscience-less legalists to stumble in their potential faith. We would likely have given up with them as not worth it. But the Lord saw the potential for faith within them. And only a few verses later we are reading Him warning that those who offend the little ones who believe in Him will be hurled to destruction (Mt. 18:6). Could it not be that the Lord saw in those hard hearted, hateful legalists in the ecclesia of His day... little ones who potentially would believe in Him? And His positive, hopeful view of them paid off. For a year or so later those types were being baptized, along with a great company of priests. People change. Remember this, and given that fact, try to hope for the best, as your Lord does with you. People can change, and they do change, even those whom at present you just can't abide in the brotherhood.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/19-2not_giving_or_taking_offence.htm

Jan. 16

Gen. 28,29

To encourage Jacob that God would bring him back to Canaan and preserve him in his life as a fugitive, he was given a vision of Angelic protection (Gen. 28:12,13) showing Angels ascending and descending from him to Heaven and back, thus showing that the Angels

looking after him would move physically to and fro between him and the throne of God, receiving directions and power to implement them in his life. God manifested through Jacob's specific guardian Angel then goes on to say, v. 15, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken of unto thee". At the end of his life, Jacob mentions the presence of the Angel which he had sensed all through his life. But that one Angel controlled the multitude of Angels which he saw that night in vision ministering to him. Our guardian Angel this very day is co-ordinating perhaps hundreds of other mighty Angels- for our sakes.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels6_1.htm

The covenant God made with Abraham was similar in style to covenants made between men at that time; and yet there was a glaring difference. Abraham was not required to do anything or take upon himself any obligations. Circumcision [cp. baptism] was to remember that this covenant of grace had been made. It isn't part of the covenant [thus we are under this same new, Abrahamic covenant, but don't require circumcision]. Perhaps this was why Yahweh but not Abraham passed between the pieces, whereas usually both parties would do so. The promises to Abraham are pure, pure grace. Sadly Jacob didn't perceive the wonder of this kind of covenant- his own covenant with God was typical of a human covenant, when he says that if God will give him some benefits, then he will give God some (Gen. 28:20). Although he knew the covenant with Abraham, the one way, gracious nature of it still wasn't perceived by him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-2The_Grace_Of_God.htm

Ps. 33

The way David praises God so ecstatically for immutable things and principles (e.g. His character) is a great example (e.g. Ps. 33:3-5); our tendency is to only seriously praise God when He resolves the unexpected crises of life.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/1.htm>

Because of the work of God as creator and the power of the Word that formed it all, we should stand in awe of Him and recognize the power of His word to us in Scripture, realizing the huge power of transformation which there is in it (Ps. 33:6-9).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp6.htm>

Mt. 18

The Lord was so positive about His disciples, just as He is about us. A nice picture of the Lord's perception of the disciples is found in the way He said that the little boy who came to Him, responding to His call (Mt. 18:2) represented the "little ones" who believed in Him (Mt. 18:6). 'Little ones' is a title of the disciples in Zech. 13:7; Mt. 18:3; Jn. 21:5; and it is disciples not literal children who have Angels in Heaven (Mt. 18:10). The context in Mt. 18:11,12 speaks of the spiritually weak, implying the 'little ones' were spiritually little as

well. Christ's talking to them while he knew they were asleep in Gethsemane and the gentle " sleep on now" , spoken to them whilst they were asleep (Mk. 14:41,42), sounds as if He was consciously treating them as children- especially fitting, given their spiritually low state then.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-6Disciples_As_Children.htm

Jan. 17

Gen. 30

The flocks conceiving in front of the rods / poles (Gen. 30:39) surely has reference to the concept of the pagan asherah poles, before which worshippers had sex. Jacob was clearly influenced by this wrong idea- and yet God patiently worked with him through it. We need to show a like patience with our weak brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-2-1Jacob_And_Idolatry.htm

Because God responds to our spirit, our overall situation, sometimes He does things which seem to be an answer of prayers which were not properly believed in by the person who prayed. Examples include: Gen. 30:16,17; Ex. 14:10,11 cp. Neh. 9:9; Ps. 31:22; Lk. 1:13. Belief and unbelief can quite comfortably co-exist in a man (Mk. 9:24; Jn. 12:39-43). These prayers were answered because God saw the overall situation, He read the spirit of those who prayed and responded appropriately, even if their faith in their specific, vocalized prayers was weak.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2-2prayer_in_the_spirit.htm

Ps. 34

In several of his Psalms, David shows an awareness that he represents all God's people, that David was our example. "The righteous cried, and the Lord heard", he could write, with easy reference to his crying to God when with Abimelech [see Psalm title]; but he goes straight on to say that God delivers all the righteous out of all their troubles (Ps. 34:4,6,17 RV). David isn't mere history- he's our living example and pattern.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-1David_Our_Example.htm

Ps. 34:3 promises that the Angel of the Lord will encamp /Mahanaim around all His servants, just as the Angel did at Mahanaim for Jacob. Jacob's struggle at [or with] Penueel strikes a chord with each of us. Frank Lake has pointed out that each person struggles to find peace in their relationships with others and also with their God- whether or not they are conscious of those struggles. Jacob's experience is clearly set up as representative of our own.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-1Jacob_Our_Example.htm

Mt. 19

In the beauty and depth of His simplicity, the Lord comprehended all this in some of the most powerful sentences of all time: It is very hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. He must shed his riches, like the camel had to unload to pass through the needle gate (Mt. 19:24). This is such a powerful lesson. And it's so simple. It doesn't need any great expositional gymnastics to understand it. Like me, you can probably remember a few things very vividly from your very early childhood. I remember my dear dad showing me this as a very young child, with a toy camel and a gate drawn on a piece of paper. And I saw the point, at four, five, maybe six. It is so clear. But what of our bank balances now, now we're old and brave? It's easier for a camel, the Lord said. Why? Surely because someone else unloads the camel, he (or she) has no say in it. But in the story, surely we must be the camel who unloads himself, who shakes it all off his humps, as an act of the will. And as we've seen, the spirit of all this applies to every one of us, including those without bank accounts.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-4Forsaking_All_We_Have.htm

Jan. 18

Gen. 31

Many times the idea of God "seeing" is found in Angelic contexts- e. g. Gen. 31:42 "the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac (i. e. the Angel whom Jacob perceived as his God-Gen. 48:15,16). . . hath seen mine affliction. . . and rebuked thee (Laban) yesternight" (in a vision- probably controlled by an Angel). In the same way God through the Angel in the burning bush could stress "I have surely seen the affliction of My people" (the Angel's charges, Ex. 3:7). Our guardian Angel sees our griefs and feels for us in them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels2_5.htm

The parable of the two sons is based around the Jacob-Esau-Laban story. It demonstrates that both the sons despised their father and their inheritance in the same way. They both wish him dead, treat him as if he isn't their father, abuse his gracious love, shame him to the world. Both finally come to their father from working in the fields. Jacob, the younger son, told Laban that "All these years I have served you... and you have not treated me justly" (Gen. 31:36-42). But these are exactly the words of the older son in the parable! The confusion is surely to demonstrate that both younger and elder son essentially held the same wrong attitudes. And the Father, clearly representing God, and God as He was manifested in Christ, sought so earnestly to reconcile both the younger and elder sons. The Lord Jesus so wished the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees to fellowship with the repenting sinners that He wept over Jerusalem; He didn't shrug them off as self-righteous bigots, as we tend to do with such people. He wept for them, as the Father so passionately pours out His love to them. And perhaps on another level we see in all this the desperate desire of the Father and Son for Jewish-Arab unity in Christ. For the promises to Ishmael show that although Messiah's line was to come through Isaac, God still has an especial interest in and love for all the children of Abraham- and that includes the Arabs. Only a joint recognition of the Father's grace will bring about Jewish-Arab unity. But in the end, it will happen- for there will be a highway from Assyria to Judah to Egypt in the Millennium. The anger of the elder brother was because the younger son had been reconciled to the Father without compensating for what he had done wrong. It's the same anger at God's grace which is shown by the workers who objected to those who had worked less receiving the same pay. And it's the same anger which

is shown every time a believer storms out of an ecclesia because some sinner has been accepted back...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a2-5The_Elder_Brother.htm

Ps. 35

David's lament over Saul was taught to the children of Judah (2 Sam. 1:18); and the chapters of 2 Samuel are full of examples of David's expression of love for Saul in every way he knew how. But it was not only at Saul's death that David had these feelings; after all, it's a lot easier to love someone when they're dead. Psalm 35 is David's commentary on his feelings for Saul: "They laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul (spiritually). But as for me, when they (Saul and his family, in the context) were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother (i.e. Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:26): I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother" (Ps. 35:11-15). Bowing down heavily as a man weeps at his mother's graveside is a powerful image. A man's grief for his mother must surely be the finest picture David could have chosen. That sense of infinite regret that he didn't appreciate her more. "As one that mourneth for his mother". But David goes on: "But in mine adversity, they rejoiced...". It's as if David realized that he had reached the point where he knew that he really did truly love his enemies. He wept for Saul as a man weeps at his dear dear mother's graveside. And he did this for a man who was utterly worthless. And this is a poor, poor shadow of the Lord's peerless love for Israel. And how much more does He love us, who at least try to make up for Israel's cruel indifference?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-10The_Love_Of_Christ.html

The idea that whoever truly loves the Lord's coming will therefore be accepted by Him can easily be abused by those who reason that anyone who has the emotion of love towards Christ will be rewarded by him. We know that true love involves both having and keeping his commands. But for those of us in Christ, these verses are still a major challenge. If we truly "look for" Christ's second coming, if we "love his appearing", this will lead us to acceptance with him. So the point is surely clinched: our attitude towards the second coming is an indicator of whether we will be saved. Time and again in the Psalms, David expresses his good conscience in terms of asking God to come and judge him (e.g. Ps. 35:24). Was this not some reference to the future theophany which David knew some day would come?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/a4.htm>

Mt. 20

We are "meet" to be partakers of the inheritance, we walk worthy of the Lord Jesus unto all pleasing of him (Col. 1:10-12), the labourers receive the penny of salvation, that which is their right (Mt. 20:14). We are either seen as absolutely perfect, or totally wicked, due to God's imputation of righteousness or evil to us (Ps. 37:37). There is no third way.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-3A_Good_Conscience.htm

Jan. 21

Gen. 32,33

It is difficult to look at the allegorical meaning of Gen.32 without noticing how the incidents look forward to the final day of Jacob's trouble at the hand of the Arabs (cp. Esau). Jacob's reliance on his own strength and subsequent semi-faith in God's word of promise typifies the Jews of today; his time of trouble truly humbled him, and his wrestling in prayer brought out the great faith which he was potentially capable of, as the final holocaust will do for the Jews. So many types of the last days emphasize the place of fervent prayer in the repentance of natural and spiritual Israel.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/4.htm>

Strong defines 'Israel' as meaning 'he who will rule as God'. This would therefore be the basis of Rev. 3:21, which promises that he who overcomes (also translated "prevail") will be a ruler with God, on His throne. It seems that the Lord has his mind back in Gen. 32, and he saw all who would attain His Kingdom as going through that same process of prevailing with God, overcoming, and being made rulers with Him. In the record of Jacob's wrestling with God, there God speaks to us (Hos. 12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-5Jacobs_Wrestling_With_God.htm

Ps. 36

To omit to hate evil is the same as to commit it (Ps. 36:4). To omit to hate evil is the same as to commit it (Ps. 36:4).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-4Sins_Of_Omission.htm

Ps. 36:8 says that God will "make us" partake of the blessings of the Kingdom of God. It reminds us of how the Lord Jesus said that in his Kingdom, he will "make us" sit down at a table, and he will come and serve us (Lk. 12:37), knowing full well that he who sits at meat is greater than he who serves (Lk. 22:27). It isn't so difficult to imagine this scene: the Lord of glory wanting us to sit down to a meal, and then He comes and serves us. He will have to "make us" sit down and let ourselves be served. Perhaps "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom" (Mt. 25:34) likewise suggests a hesitancy of the faithful to enter the Kingdom. And perhaps the way the Lord had to 'make' the healed blind man look up and use his new sight was some kind of foretaste of this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment5_1.htm

Mt. 21

Through Christ's sin-bearing and sin-feeling, He enabled God Himself to know something of it too, as a Father learns and feels through a son. Thus God is likened to a man who goes away into a far country (Mt. 21:33)- the very words used by the Lord to describe how the

sinner goes into a far country in his departure from the Father (Lk. 15:13). "My servant" was both Israel and the Lord Jesus; He was their representative in His sufferings.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-11Why_Forsaken_Me.htm

Jan. 20

Gen. 34,35

Many of the problems we face, not least marriage out of the Faith, are associated with a chronic lack of appreciation of covenant relationship. If Dinah had married Hamor, this would have been a covenant relationship which would have resulted in the people of God and the surrounding world becoming "one people" (Gen. 34:16,22). We can't very well marry out of the Faith and claim we are still God's people, separated from the world. Through baptism, we are the seed of Abraham, we are the people of God, we have been selected to undergo a few years preparation now, so that when the Lord comes we may enter His Kingdom. We are not here, therefore, to get the maximum happiness and self-realization we can, living as if this life is the end.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-9Marriage_Out_Of_The_Faith.htm

The Genesis record frames the seed of Abraham as acting far worse than the surrounding world. Nothing's changed- the people of this world are often nicer people than we who are in God's family. Dinah goes downtown to have a fling. She ends up sleeping with the prince of Shechem. As a result of this, her brothers trick the men of Shechem into being circumcised and then come and murder the lot of them. Humanly, the sons of Jacob, unrepentant as they were (34:31), should have taken the consequence of their evil at the hand of the vengeful surrounding tribes. But God, in His grace, preserves them by a miracle (35:5). By contrast, the Prince of Shechem didn't rape her, and he didn't just discard her. He could easily have just taken her as his wife with no more discussion with her family. He did the honourable thing in that he honestly wanted to marry her, and would do absolutely anything to enable this (Gen. 34).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-1-3Believers_Arent_Good_People.htm

Ps. 37

A day of answerability is surely coming. God "delights in every detail of their lives" (Ps. 37:23); and the more we perceive that interest, the more we will live the purpose driven life. Yet the tendency is to just assume these gifts from God as what we have almost by right, and that He is willing for us to live the life He has given us without deeply analyzing our choices and decisions; that our talents are things we can use as we wish because they are what life dished up to us. But they have been granted by an eager Father, anxiously watching how we will use them in His service, not our own. Life is a test, a trust, rather than a few decades pursuing our own happiness. We have been made unique, with unique thumbprints, eyes, voices, and each heart beats to a different pattern. And of course all this is reflected in our unique emotional makeups. All these things are given us to fulfill our unique role in the body of Christ- a part only we can play. We have a huge personal responsibility to use our lives for the God who gave them to us. What is made in His image- i.e. our bodies- must be given back to Him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/21.htm>

At judgment God "shall bring forth thy righteousness (good deeds) as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day" (Ps. 37:6). The sins of the rejected and the good deeds of the righteous will be publicly declared at the judgment, even if they are concealed from men in this life (1 Tim. 5:24,25). This is how men will receive "praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rom. 2:29). The wicked will see the generous deeds of the righteous rehearsed before them; and will gnash their teeth and melt away into condemnation (Ps. 112:9,10).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_4.htm

Mt. 22

Good and bad guests come together to the wedding (Mt. 22:10), there are wise and foolish virgins, good and bad fish slopping around all over each other, wheat and tares growing together...this is a real emphasis. An appreciation of this will end the image that if someone's a Christian they must be spiritually OK, that we're all loving aunties and uncles, that somehow Christian = safe. I know this isn't what we want to hear the Lord saying. But whatever else are we supposed to take all this emphasis to mean? The rejected in Mt. 22:12 are described as " friend" , the same term the Lord used about Judas (Mt. 26:50). The suggestion is that there are Judases amongst us, although we can't identify them (and shouldn't try), just as the disciples couldn't. The evil servant who (in Christ's eyes) beat his brethren was a hypocrite, he didn't appear to men to be like that (Mt. 24:48-51); he was only cut asunder, revealed for who he was, at the judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-2Jesus_Who_Understands_Human_Weakness.htm

Jan. 21

Gen. 36

Time and again in the record of Esau it is emphasized that he married Gentiles. The record mentions this fact no fewer than nine times in Gen. 36 alone! Why such emphasis? Surely to demonstrate how through the millennia of human history, God has remembered Esau's behaviour and held it against him, recording it for our learning.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-9Marriage_Out_Of_The_Faith.htm

God's apostate people act or are recorded as acting in terms of their Arab cousins. The description of Israel as Aholibah in Ezekiel 23: 4 recalls Esau's wife Aholibamah (Gen. 36: 2), again associating them with the rejected Arab peoples. There is a connection between Israel's renegade king Saul and the Horite Zibeon, who should have been 'cast out' of the land too (cp. Gen. 36: 24 and 1 Sam. 9: 3). This is why the rejected amongst the new Israel will be condemned with the world, sent back into the world to share its judgment. We either separate from the spirit of this world now; or we will be sent back into it in the last day. We must come out of Babylon, or share her judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/2-3-2The_Jewish_Satan.htm

Ps. 38

Christ's lovers, friends and kinsmen stood far off from Him at His death (Ps. 38:11), perhaps in a literal sense, perhaps far away from understanding Him. It seems that initially, Mary didn't stand by the cross; He looked for comforters and found none (Ps. 69:20- or does this imply that the oft mentioned spiritual difference between the Lord and His mother meant that He didn't find comfort in her? Or she only came to the cross later?). If indeed Mary and the few with her came from standing far off to stand by the cross, they were sharing the spirit of Joseph and Nicodemus: 'In the light of the cross, nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing really matters now. The shame, embarrassment nothing. We will stand for Him and His cause, come what may'. I can only ponder the use of the imperfect in Jn. 19:25: 'There were standing' may imply that Mary and the women came and went; sometimes they were there by the cross, sometimes afar off. Did they retreat from grief, or from a sense of their inadequacy, or from being driven off by the hostile crowd or soldiers, only to make their way stubbornly back? Tacitus records that no spectators of a crucifixion were allowed to show any sign of grief; this was taken as a sign of compliance with the sin of the victim. He records how some were even crucified for showing grief at a crucifixion. This was especially so in the context of leaders of revolutionary movements, which was the reason why Jesus was crucified. This would explain why the women stood afar off, and sometimes in moments of self-control came closer. Thus the Lord looked for comforters and found none, according to the spirit of prophecy in the Psalms. And yet His mother was also at the foot of the cross sometimes. For her to be there, so close to Him as she undoubtedly wished to be, and yet not to show emotion, appearing to the world to be another indifferent spectator; the torture of mind must be meditated upon. Any of these scenarios provides a link with the experience of all who would walk out against the wind of this world, and identify ourselves with the apparently hopeless cause of the crucified Christ. The RV of Jn. 19:25 brings out the tension between the soldiers standing there, and the fact that: "But there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother...". The "but..." signals, perhaps, the tension of the situation- for it was illegal to stand in sympathy by the cross of the victim. And there the soldiers were, specially in place to stop it happening, standing nearby...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-9Woman_Behold_Thy_Son.htm

David learnt the secret of seeing the positive in our weak brethren, and he didn't let all that was wrong with Saul interfere with this. He describes himself as responding to criticism like this: "I as a deaf man, heard not" (Ps. 38:13). Yet he was alluding to how Saul, when likewise criticized by "sons of belial", "was as though he had been deaf" to their words (1 Sam. 10:27 RVmg.). He saw the good in Saul, he remembered that one good example he showed- and it empowered him to follow it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-3-2David_And_Saul.htm

Mt. 23

Mt. 23:11 speaks of he that is [now] the greatest amongst us will be the servant now; but elsewhere the Lord's idea is that he who will be the greatest must be servant now. But effectively, by taking the lowest position now, we are being given the highest place. When the disciples were concerned about who would be the greatest in the future, the Lord replied

by speaking of who amongst them is the greatest- by doing acts of humble service (Lk. 22:24,26).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment5_5.htm

Jan. 22

Gen. 37

When Zedekiah called Jeremiah out of the prison house to meet him and show him the word of God, he ought to have perceived that he was going through the very experience of Pharaoh with Joseph (Jer. 37:17,20). Jeremiah's desperate plea not to be sent back to prison to die there surely echoes that of Joseph to his brethren; for Jeremiah was let down like Joseph had been into a pit with no water in, so reminiscent of Joseph (Gen. 37:24). But Zedekiah didn't want to see all this; he should've listened to Jeremiah, as Pharaoh had listened to Joseph and saved himself. It was all potentially set up for him; but he refused to take note. God sets up potential situations in our lives, every day- but we often fail to take use of them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

There seems to have been something unusual about the Lord's outer garment. The same Greek word *chiton* used in Jn. 19:23,24 is that used in the LXX of Gen. 37:3 to describe Joseph's coat of many pieces. Josephus (*Antiquities* 3.7.4,161) uses the word for the tunic of the High Priest, which was likewise not to be rent (Lev. 21:10). The Lord in His time of dying is thus set up as High Priest, gaining forgiveness for His people, to 'come out' of the grave as on the day of Atonement, pronouncing the forgiveness gained, and bidding His people spread that good news world-wide.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-8-1naked_crucifixion.htm

Ps. 39,40

Ps. 39:4-6 has the same theme: because of the mortality of man, there is utterly no point in being "disquieted in vain" on account of amassing wealth.

Ps. 39:1-6 makes a connection between appreciating our mortality, and controlling our words in the presence of those who provoke us. David calmed himself down when "my heart was hot within me" by asking God to remind him of "my end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am" (Ps. 39:4). Again, a very basic Bible principle resulted in something poignantly practical. In the very moment of hot blood, under provocation, David silently asked to appreciate personally the mortality of man; so that he wouldn't respond with hard words, and would 'keep his mouth with a bridle'.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp10.htm>

Mt. 24

The evil servant will be " cut asunder" (Mt. 24:51), i.e. his hypocrisy will be openly revealed for the first time (remember, he was an ecclesial elder in mortal life, according to the parable). What we have spoken in the Lord's ear will be revealed by Him openly (" from the housetops") at the judgment (Lk. 12:3). We therefore should live transparent lives now, seeing they will ultimately be transparent in the last day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-8Parables_Of_Judgment.htm

Jan. 23

Gen. 38

Time and again Biblical history demonstrates that sins of silence and omission are just as fatal as sins of public, physical commission. Sarah omitted to say that Abraham was her husband; and was reproved (Gen. 20:16). Onan omitted to raise up seed to his brother, and was slain (Gen. 38:10). What are we *omitting* to do this day...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-4Sins_Of_Omission.htm

Judah also did wrong in Timnath (Jud. 14:1) with a woman, and was deceived and shamed by her (Jud. 15:1 = Gen. 38:17). Earlier Scripture, which it seems Samson well knew and appreciated, was crying out to Samson to take heed. But he was blind to the real import of it all. And are we likewise?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-2-1Repetition_In_Biblical_Narratives.htm

Ps. 41-43

The Lord's relationship with Judas is one of the clearest indications of his humanity, as well as his method of reasoning from the Scriptures and his limited knowledge. There is evidence to indicate that Judas was one of the most spiritual of the disciples, and as such among those closest to Jesus. He was " Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted" (Ps. 41:9); and the Hebrew for " trusted" means 'a place of going for refuge', as if he sought Judas' company in times of pressure. Of few men would Jesus say " A man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance" (Ps. 55:13). " Acquaintance" implies a close friend through sharing of knowledge, showing their relationship was based around spiritual things. The LXX renders " guide" as " a man of my own mind" , and seeing Christ's mind was like God's (Phil. 2:5-7) this was quite a statement. The Hebrew for " guide" means a leader (Prov. 2:17; 16:28; Jer. 3:4; 61 times out of 70 it implies a superior), indicating that our Lord was influenced by men and was prepared to listen and learn from them (1). Here we see His humanity and yet also His need for strengthening. " We took sweet counsel together" (Ps. 55:14) implies an assembly or sitting down on conference (the same word is in Prov. 15:22; Ps. 83:3; Jer. 15:17 with this usage), suggesting that our Lord sat down in discussion with Judas, as David used to with Ahithophel. They " walked unto the house of God in company" (Ps. 55:14), giving the picture of the two of them slightly apart from the twelve as they journeyed to keep the feasts, deep in stimulating spiritual conversation. Judas, the one who rose the highest, had the furthest to fall.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-10Jesus_And_Judas.htm

There is much guidance in the Psalms about unanswered prayer. In the midst of complaining to God about the pain of unanswered prayer, the Psalmist in the very same breath is still praising Him and believing Him. "God whom I praise, break your silence" (Ps. 109:1); "I say to God my rock, Why have you forgotten me?" (Ps. 42:9). Yet all this said, the agony of unanswered prayer remains to some extent one of the mysteries of spiritual life. From our human point of view, the agony remains. We can seek to understand God's point of view on it, but for us, unhealed bodies and broken lives remain, for all the faith and seeking to discern God's will in the world.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/5.htm>

Mt. 25

The chapter division between Matthew 24 and 25 is unfortunate. The description of the rejected at the judgment given in Mt. 24:51 is followed straight on by Matthew 25:1: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven (i.e. entry into it) be likened unto ten virgins...". This may suggest that the rejected will have time for reflection - then they will see the 'likeness' between their position and the parable of the virgins. This parable follows that of the negligent steward who will be rejected at the judgment (Matt. 24:45), implying that a lack of proper spiritual care by the elders of the latter-day ecclesias results in the lack of oil in the lamps of the rejected.

There can be little doubt that the parable is intended to have a specific latter-day application. The virgins "took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Mt. 25:1), but settled down to slumber due to his unexpected delay. Then "at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matt. 25:6). Obviously there is a general application of the parable to all believers who at the time of their baptism have oil in their lamps - which needs continual topping up by our freewill effort. The whole of the believer's probation should therefore be in the spirit of a journey to the judgment / wedding, believing that Christ is at the door. The 'arising' of the virgins in Matt. 25:7 would then refer to the resurrection.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment8.htm>

Jan. 24

Gen. 39,40

There is an undoubted link between sexuality and spirituality (witness the typical meaning of the Song of Solomon). The Hebrew text of Gen. 39:6,7 suggests that it was Joseph's spiritually attractive personality that mesmerized Potiphar's wife; and what good living, socially aloof Christian office worker has not experienced the attention this attracts from colleagues of the opposite sex?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-2Bathsheba_Saint_Or_Sinner.htm

It is possible that the thief on the cross had a really deep Bible knowledge. "Remember me when thou comest in thy Kingdom" is almost certainly reference to Gen. 40:14, where Joseph desperately and pathetically asks: "But think on me when it shall be well with thee...". Joseph

went on to say "...here also have I done nothing that they should out me into the dungeon" (Gen. 40:15). This is very much the spirit of "This man hath done nothing amiss...". In the carrying of our crosses with Christ, are our thoughts likewise in the word?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-10Today_You_With_Me_Paradise.htm

Ps. 44

Ps. 44:20,21 state that to remember the Name of God takes place in the secret places of the heart. To remember the Name doesn't mean to remember that oh yes, His Name is 'Yahweh'. We remember the Name in the secret heart- it's such a personal thing. God will search the secret heart to see if we have forgotten the Name or whether those principles still affect our walk. For the things of the Name affect our lives and thinking to the very core. The Lord Jesus fed off the majesty of the Name of Yahweh (Mic. 5:4)- this was how inspirational He found the things of the Name. To fear the Name of Yahweh was to "observe to do all the words of this law" (Dt. 28:58). Meditation and sustained reflection upon the characteristics of God as epitomized and memorialized in His Name will of itself lead to a conformation of personality to that same Name. If we declare that Name to others, they too have the chance to be transformed by it- thus Moses comments: "Because I will publish the name of the Lord, ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Dt. 32:3).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

The more closely we analyze the Bible heroes, the more apparent it is that they were shot through with weakness; and some of those weaknesses it seems they unsuccessfully battled with until the day of their death. I think of Jacob, always trusting in his own strength, being progressively taught to trust in Yahweh's strength. And yet right at the very end of his life, he lets slip a comment which would seem more appropriate to his earlier life: " Shechem...which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow" (Gen. 48:22). The wrongness of this attitude seems to be alluded to in Josh. 24:12, which says that God drove out the Amorites " but not with thy sword, neither with thy bow" . And Ps. 44:3,6 also: " They got not the land in possession by their own sword...I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me" . So Jacob, right at the end of his life, still hadn't completely overcome that besetting weakness of self-reliance. This is, of course, a dangerous road to go down. In no way can we be complacent about our urgent need for spiritual growth. But on the other hand, we will never reach the stature of Christ without righteousness being imputed to us. In this sense, true Christian believers aren't good people.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-1-3Believers_Arent_Good_People.htm

Mt. 26

The Lord gently sought to get Peter to see that really and truly, he was called to a life of cross carrying. Mt. 26:36 has the Lord saying to the disciples: "Sit in this place [kathisate autou] until going away, I pray there", and then He takes along with him [paralambanein] Peter. These are the very words used in the Gen. 22 LXX account of Abraham taking Isaac to 'the cross'. Jesus is seeking to encourage Peter to see himself as Isaac, being taken to share in the cross. Now whether Peter discerned this or not, we don't know. But the Lord gave him the potential possibility to be inspired like this. And He does the same to us in our daily hearing of His word. The question is, whether we will perceive it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-2-1Peter_And_The_Cross.htm

Jan. 25

Gen. 41

To be sensitive to the poor, to understand them, to have a heart that bleeds for them- this is what God seeks in us. The chief butler felt that he had committed a very serious sin in allowing the busyness of daily life and his demanding job to make him simply forget Joseph's need and tragedy. The word in Gen. 41:9 for "faults" is really "sins". Perhaps an intensive plural is being used here- as if to mean 'my very great sin'. To forget others' need due to the busyness of our lives is a great sin.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-4loving_our_brethren.htm

The record of the prodigal's treatment at the homecoming suggests that we are to see in this the sharing of Christ's personal reward with repentant sinners. Removing his rags and clothing him with the best robe recalls Zech.3:4, concerning the very same thing happening to Christ at his glorification. Being given a robe, ring and shoes takes us back to Joseph/Jesus being similarly arrayed in the day of his glory (Gen.41:42). This parable is rich in reference to the Joseph story, with Joseph's brothers typifying Israel and all sinners. But now there is a powerful twist in the imagery. The sinners (cp. the brothers) now share the reward of the saint (cp. Joseph). This is the very basis of the Gospel of justification in Christ, through having his righteousness imputed to us, so that we can share in his rewards. This will fully be realized at the marriage supper of the lamb, although it also occurs in a sense each time we repent, and live out the parable of the prodigal's repentance again.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a2-3The_Prodigal%27s_Repentance.htm

Ps. 45

Because of the gracious words and manner of speaking of Jesus, therefore God so highly exalted Him (Ps. 45:2). The Father was so impressed with the words of His Son. Lk. 4:22 records how people were amazed at the gracious words He spoke; there was something very unusual in His manner of speaking. Evidently there must have been something totally outstanding about His use of language. God highly exalted Him because He so loved righteousness and hated wickedness (Ps. 45:7), and yet also because of His manner of speaking (Ps. 45:2); so this love of righteousness and hatred of evil was what made His words so special. The Lord's choice of language was therefore radically different. And so should ours be.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-14.htm>

In many discussions with trinitarians, I came to observe how very often, a verse I would quote supporting the humanity of Jesus would be found very near passages which speak of His Divine side. For example, most 'proof texts' for both the 'Jesus=God' position and the 'Jesus was human' position- are all from the same Gospel of John. So many 'debates' about the nature of Jesus miss this point; the sheer wonder of this man, this more than man, was that

He was so genuinely human, and yet perfectly manifested God. This was and is the compelling wonder of this Man. These two aspects of the Lord, the exaltation and the humanity, are spoken of together in the Old Testament too. A classic example would be Ps. 45:6,7: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever [this is quoted in the New Testament about Jesus]...God, thy God, hath anointed thee [made you Christ]". The juxtaposition of the Lord's humanity and His exaltation is what is so unique about Him. And it's what is so hard for people to accept, because it demands so much faith in a man, that He could be really so God-like.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-23.htm>

Mt. 27

One of the themes of the crucifixion records is that the same abuse and suffering was repeated to the Lord. Hence the frequent usage of the continuous tense. During the trial by Pilate, the Lord underwent mock worship and spitting (Jn. 19:3). Then later it was mock worship, spitting, hitting on the head (Mt. 27:29,30). And then hitting on the head, spitting, mock worship (Mk. 15:19,20). It seems they alternated bruising / spitting on Christ with bruising / kneeling before Him in mock homage. The reed was used as a mock diadem, although instead of touching His shoulder with it they hit Him on the head with it. They put it in His hand as a sceptre and then snatched it back to hit Him on the head with it. Wave after wave of the same treatment. Notice how many times the word "again" features in the Greek text (palin). This is the essence of our temptations. And it was a big theme in the Lord's final human experience. Likewise a comparison of the records shows that "Come down..." was clearly said more than once, the continuous tenses notwithstanding (Mt. 27:40 cp. Mk. 15:30). However, it is worth cataloguing the use of continuous tenses in this part of the record: The crowd kept on crying out (as demons did), "Crucify him" (Mt. 27:23); the soldiers kept on clothing Him (Mt. 27:28), kept on coming to Him and kept on saying... (Jn. 19:3 Gk.), Pilate kept on seeking (imperfect) to deliver the Lord (Jn. 19:12), thereby agitating the tension in the Lord's mind. They kept on kneeling (27:29), kept on spitting (v.30), kept on passing in front of Him on the cross and kept on shaking their heads (v. 39), kept on saying "...save thyself", kept on mocking and asking Him to come down from the cross (vv. 40,41), the soldiers kept on coming to Him and offering Him their vinegar in mock homage (Lk. 23:36), they kept on offering Him the pain killer. They kept on and on and on. This is an undoubted theme.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-4-3bruising_of_christ.htm

Jan. 26

Gen. 42,43

It is significant that many of the men who typified Jesus are also frequently called "the man", as if to point back to Adam, another type of Jesus, and forward to "the man Christ Jesus". For example, Moses is called "the man" at least 5 times: Ex.11:3; 32:1,23; Num.12:3; Josh,14:6; and we know he was a type of Jesus (Dt.18:18). Likewise Joseph is called "the man" at least 10 times (Gen.42:30,33; 43:3,5,6,7,11,13,14,17). The humanity of Jesus is thus stressed- He really was like us and knows our feelings of this day, yesterday, and all our yesterdays.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/10-1-4creation_of_man_and_woman.htm

Exactly because God is God and not man, He will not punish His people according to what He had said He would do. His “repentings were kindled together” (Hos. 11:8), alluding through the same Hebrew words to how Joseph’s innermost being “did yearn upon his brother” (Gen. 43:30), in prophecy of how God would accept Israel in the last days. God has passionate feelings for us, right now.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3-1The_Love_Of_God_In_Hosea.htm

Ps. 46-48

In Rev. 8:8 we have an Angel casting a mountain into the sea. This must surely connect with the Lord's encouragement that we can cast mountains into the sea by our faith (Mk. 11:23). Therefore... it surely follows that our prayers have a direct effect upon the Angels. They throw mountains around because of our faithful prayer... Inevitably we see a connection with Ps. 46:2, which comforts us not to fear when mountains are cast into sea. Surely the point is that we shouldn't be scared when we perceive the awesomeness of the power of prayer and its influence upon Angels. It's all too easy to ask for things without perceiving how it would really be if that prayer were answered. We need to have specific and focused faith in what we ask for, realizing that legions of Angels are potentially able to operationalize what we ask for.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels7_5.htm

God loved Jacob, and worked with him so patiently, to build the house of Israel His people. There's comfort enough for every man and woman, reading this record. The way Jacob is simply described as the one whom God loved in Ps. 47:4 is majestic in its brevity. God loved Jacob. He really did. Simple as that. When Jacob is the one presented as having struggled with God more than any other.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-2-2Jacob_Rachel_Leah.htm

Mt. 28

Put together the following passages:

- The disciples' return to Galilee after the resurrection was a result of their lack of faith (Jn. 16:31,32)

- But the Lord went before them, as a shepherd goes before His sheep, into Galilee (Mt. 28:7). Even in their weakness of faith, He was still their shepherd, they were still His sheep, and He led them even then.

- The Lord told them to go to Galilee (Mt. 28:10). He accepted their lower level of faith. And He worked through that and led them through it.

The return to Galilee is seen in an even worse light once we reflect on the circumstances surrounding the first calling of the disciples, nearly four years earlier. John's Gospel implies that they were called at Bethany; whereas the other Gospels say they were called whilst fishing at the sea of Galilee. This is usually, and correctly, harmonized by concluding that

they were called as John says in Bethany, but they then returned to their fishing in Galilee, and the Lord went there to call them again. So returning to their fishing in Galilee had already been shown to them as being a running away from the call of their Lord. And yet still they did it. And yet John's inspired record is so positive; he speaks as if the disciples were called at Bethany and unwaveringly responded immediately. The point that they actually lost their intensity and returned home is gently omitted from specific mention. Do we have this gentleness in dealing with the weakness of others?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-6Disciples_As_Children.htm

Jan. 27

Gen. 44,45

The whole story of Joseph is one of the clearest types of Jesus in the Old Testament. The way His brethren come before His throne and are graciously accepted is one of the most gripping foretastes we have of the final judgment. The rather strange way Joseph behaves towards them was surely to elicit within them a true repentance. He sought to bring them to self-knowledge through His cup. Joseph stresses to the brethren that it is through his cup that he "divines" to find out their sin. He also emphasizes that by stealing the cup they had "done evil" (Gen. 44:4,5). And yet they didn't actually steal the cup. The "evil" which they had done was to sell him into Egypt (Gen. 50:20). They had "stolen" him (Gen. 40:15) in the same way they had "stolen" the cup. This is why he says that "ye" (you plural, not singular, as it would have been if he was referring merely to Benjamin's supposed theft) had stolen it (Gen. 44:15). And the brethren in their consciences understood what Joseph was getting at- for instead of insisting that they hadn't stolen the cup, they admit: "What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" (Gen. 44:16). Clearly their minds were on their treatment of Joseph, the sin which they had thought would not be found out. And this was why they were all willing to bear the punishment of becoming bondmen, rather than reasoning that since Benjamin had apparently committed the crime, well he alone must be punished. The cup was "found" and they realized that God had "found out" their joint iniquity (Gen. 44:10,12,16). The cup was perceived by them as their "iniquity" with Joseph. They had used the very same Hebrew words years before, in telling Jacob of Joseph's garment: "This have we found..." (Gen. 37:32).

The cup made them realize their guilt and made them acceptive of the judgment they deserved. And it made them quit their attempts at parading their own righteousness, no matter how valid it was in the immediate context (Gen. 44:8). The cup made them realize their real status, and not just use empty words. Behold the contradiction in Gen. 44:9: "With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my Lord's bondmen / servants". The Hebrew words translated "servants" and "bondmen" are the same. Their mere formal recognition that they were Joseph's servants was to be translated into reality. Thus they say that Joseph had "found out the iniquity of thy servants; behold, we are my Lord's servants". Describing themselves as His servants had been a mere formalism; now they wanted it in a meaningful reality. And the Lord's cup can do the same to us. The way they were "searched" (Gen. 44:12) from the oldest to the youngest was surely the background for how the guilty men pined away in guilt from the Lord, from the eldest to the youngest. The whole experience would have elicited self-knowledge within them. The same word is found in Zech. 1:12, describing how God Himself would search out the sin of Jerusalem.

Joseph was trying to tell them: 'What you did to the cup, you did to me. That cup is a symbol of me'. And inevitably the mind flies to how the Lord solemnly took the cup and said that this was Him. Our attitude to those emblems is our attitude to Him. We have perhaps over-reacted against the Roman Catholic view that the wine turns into the very blood of Jesus. It doesn't, of course, but all the same the Lord did say that the wine is His blood, the bread is His body. Those emblems are effectively Him to us. They are symbols, but not mere symbols. If we take them with indifference, with minds focused on externalities, then this is our essential attitude to Him personally. This is why the memorial meeting ought to have an appropriate intensity about it- for it is a personal meeting with Jesus. "Here O my Lord, I see thee face to face". If it is indeed this, then the cup will be the means of eliciting within us our own realization of sin and subsequently, of our salvation in Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-5josephs_cup_of_divination.htm

Ps. 49

Ps. 49:16-20, in its context, warns against striving for material things and not envying the rich, because death for them is an eternal unconsciousness. And more positively, because there can be no activity, mentally or physically, in the grave...therefore now is the time to live a life active to the absolute maximum possibility in the Lord's service (Ecc. 9:10-12).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp10.htm>

No man can redeem his brother (Ps. 49:7), or bear the iniquity of another (Ez. 18:20). But Christ, as a man, acceptably bore our iniquity. Adam was to die in the day he ate the fruit. But he didn't. These are redemption's finest mysteries. No theory of atonement can ever explain the paradox of redemption.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3Bible_Paradoxes.htm

Rom. 1,2

There is a mutuality between God and His children in prayer. We 'make mention' of things to God (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2; Philemon 4). The Greek word used has the idea of bringing to mind, or remembering things to God. And He in response 'remembers' prayer when He answers it (Lk. 1:54,72; Acts 10:31 s.w.). What we bring to our mind in prayer, we bring to His mind.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm

Jan. 28

Gen. 46,47

" The sons of Simeon were Nemuel and Jamin...and Shaul" (1 Chron. 4:24); but Gen. 46:10 shows that Shaul was Simeon's son by a wrong, casual relationship. Yet this is not recorded in Chronicles, even though so many other weaknesses are. Surely this is to demonstrate how

if God imputes righteousness for a repented of sin, there really is no record of this kept by Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-8-2Lessons_From_Chronicles_Genealogies.htm

Truth is not merely a set of doctrines; it refers to an obedient life. The LXX uses the phrase 'to do truth', which John uses, in passages like 2 Chron. 31:20 (about Hezekiah's obedience to commandments), or in Gen. 47:29; Is. 26:10 to describe simply doing and living what is right. The fact truth must be done indicates it is not merely correct academic interpretation of doctrine.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-4the_truth_of_christ.htm

Ps. 50

Psalms 50 is really a commentary upon the implications of covenant relationship. Those who have "made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:3) are not to respond to this merely by a thoughtless offering of sacrifices; but rather, if they "take my covenant in thy mouth" they are to declare God's statutes and love instruction (Ps. 50:16,17). They are to live a life of praise that is based around a Godly lifestyle (Ps. 50:23). Thus if we are in covenant relationship, we will declare that to the world; and it will elicit a committed lifestyle from us. Being in covenant with God led David to "be instructed"; and he implies that those who truly know the covenant will "declare" it in witness to others (Ps. 50:16,17).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Psalms 50 is an Old Testament prophecy of the judgment seat of Christ: "Our God shall come (in Christ)...He shall call to the heavens...that he may judge his people (cp. the call to judgment). Gather my saints together unto me (cp. Mt. 25:30-32)...for God is judge himself" describes how the specific words and actions of God's people will then be considered- and that includes the words we speak and the things we do *today*: "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him (actions)...thou gavest thy mouth to evil (words)...these things hast thou done, and I kept silence (in this life)...but I will (now) reprove thee (at judgment day), and set them in order before thine eyes".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_4.htm

Rom. 3,4

Throughout Romans, the point is made that the Lord counts as righteous those that believe; righteousness is imputed to us the unrighteous (Rom. 2:26; 4:3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24; 8:36; 9:8). But the very same Greek word is used of our self-perception. We must count / impute ourselves as righteous men and women, and count each other as righteous on the basis of recognising each others' faith rather than works: "Therefore we conclude [we count / impute / consider] that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law... Likewise reckon [impute] ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord". (Rom. 3:28; 6:11). We should feel clean and righteous, and act accordingly, both in our own behaviour and in our feelings towards each other. Border-line language and expressions, clothing with worldly slogans, watching violence and

pornography...these are not things which will be done by someone who feels and perceives him/herself to be clean and righteous, "in Christ".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-13Pauls_SelfPerception.htm

Jan. 29

Gen. 48-50

Jacob's attaining a true humility, his making Yahweh his very own God, his realization of the personal relevance of the promises of the Gospel, resulted in a wonderful opening up of Jacob at the end. Throughout his life, he comes over as a man of few words. It made an interesting exercise to copy out all the words Jacob is recorded as saying. Until Gen. 48 and 49, we are left with the a kind of staccato effect; he speaks with jerks and jolts, often with an underlying bitterness and deep suspicion; and there are some profound silences recorded, where he simply doesn't respond, but bottles everything up inside him (28:5; 35:9-13, 19, 29). There is no record of any weeping after the death of his dear Rachel, or leaving his beloved mum, or at the death of his father who had such a huge spiritual influence on him; and there were precious few words from him when he learnt of the supposed death of Joseph (37:35). But now at the end, there is a tremendous openness, words flow from him; he knows whom he has believed, and can speak confidently to his family about Him, from his own experience. One senses a great sense of positiveness about him. At age 130, he mumbled to Pharaoh: " Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been" , as if every day had dragged (47:9). But at the very end, 17 years later, he more positively speaks of the Angel that had redeemed him from all evil (48:15).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-3-2The_Humility_Of_Jacob.htm

The sense of mutuality between God and Jacob was associated with Jacob's achievement of a true humility. The way he blessed his sons in Gen. 49 indicates this; note how he saw Isaachar's greatness in the fact he was a humble servant (49:14). He learnt the lesson of that night of wrestling; his natural strength was not to be gloried in, neither was this to be his true greatness. The way he rebukes and effectively rejects Reuben, Simeon and Levi, the sons who had flaunted their natural strength and prowess, reflects the perspectives which Jacob attained at the end. " Reuben...my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power...thou shalt not excel" (49:3,4) sounds as if Jacob associated his natural strength with Reuben, and yet now he rejected it. Doubtless these men gathered round their father expecting to hear some sweet fatherly blessing mixed with a few gentle reproofs for past behaviour. The whole process of Israel's sons being " gathered" to him and receiving their blessing and judgment is typical of the final judgment, showing how Jacob was a type of Christ at this time. The surprise of the sons we are left to imagine, but it would point forward quite accurately to the surprise which will be a feature of the rejected (Mt. 25:44).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-3-2The_Humility_Of_Jacob.htm

Ps. 51,52

There is a connection with Romans in Ps. 51:4, where David recognizes " Against thee...have I sinned...that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest"

. He recognized that God works through our sinfulness- he is effectively saying 'I sinned so that You might be justified...'. These words are quoted in Rom. 3:4,5 in the context of Paul's exultation that " our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God" - in just the same way as David's did! Because God displays His righteousness every time He justifies a repentant sinner, He is in a sense making Himself yet more righteous. We must see things from God's perspective, from the standpoint of giving glory to God's righteous attributes. If we do this, then we can see through the ugliness of sin, and come to terms with our transgressions the more effectively. And Paul quotes David's sin with Bathsheba as our supreme example in this. We along with all the righteous ought to "shout for joy" that David really was forgiven (Ps. 32:11)- for there is such hope for us now. David is our example. And yet the intensity of David's repentance must be ours. He hung his head as one in whose mouth there were no more arguments, hoping only in the Lord's grace (Ps. 38:14 RVmg.). Notice too how Ps. 51:1 "Have mercy on me, O God..." is quoted by the publican in Lk. 18:13. He felt that David's prayer and situation was to be his. And he is held up as the example for each of us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-1David_Our_Example.htm

Through his experience, David came to know what he calls 'truth in the inward parts' (Ps. 51:6): that he " was shapen in iniquity" , and the required sacrifice was a desperately broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17). According to Paul's use of the Bathsheba incident, David's learning curve must be ours. There are other links which show that David's sin, desperation and restoration are typical of the experience of all God's true people (e.g. Ps. 51:7 = Is. 1:18).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-2Sin_Is_Serious.htm

Rom. 5,6

The fact that God looks at us so positively, as if we are actually Christ, in that we are " in Him" , means that in this sense we cannot sin (1 Jn. 2:1), in that Christ cannot now sin. Our spiritual man is now " saved" in prospect. The devil is now dead in Christ, and sin is likewise dead in us too, insofar as we are " in Christ" (Heb. 2:14; Rom. 8:3). " The old man" of sin has been destroyed in our association with the death of Christ, so that " the body of sin" might be destroyed at the judgment seat (Rom. 6:6). Sin is dead without law (Rom. 7:8), and yet sin is described, in the same context, as being dead in us (Rom. 6:11; 8:3); this is because we are not under any legal code. Salvation is by grace, through our faith that God really is giving it to us. And if we truly have faith, then we will show that faith in a life of conformity to the spirit of Christ. We are " free from sin" (Rom. 6:22), in the sense that we are not now under any legal code which could impute sin to us (Rom. 5:13). The spiritual man is born of God, and therefore " cannot commit sin" (1 Jn. 3:9). God " will not" (in the present and in the future, the Greek implies) impute sin to those in Christ (Rom. 4:8). As it is impossible for God to see men as righteous outside of Christ, so He finds it impossible to see them as sinners when they are truly counted as in Christ (Rom. 6:20 cp. 22). " Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (Jn. 8:34), but those in Christ are counted as not being the servants of sin, but of Christ (Rom. 6:17). The connection with Jn. 8:34 makes this tantamount to saying that they are reckoned as not committing sin.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-2-2The_Spiritual_Man.html

Jan. 30

Ex. 1,2

The Passover, as the prototype breaking of bread, featured bitter herbs to remind Israel of their bitter experience in Egypt (Ex. 1:14). The breaking of bread should likewise focus our attention on the fact that return to the world is a return to bondage and bitterness, not freedom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-5Importance_of_Breaking_of_Bread.html

Moses fled from Egypt, not fearing the wrath of Pharaoh; he went in faith (Heb. 11:27). But the Exodus record explains that actually he couldn't keep this level of faith, and fled in fear (Ex. 2:14,15). God knows that we have this terrible capacity to lose spiritual intensity. His most faithful servants have been afflicted with this problem.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

Ps. 53-55

Praise is a sacrifice (Ps. 54:6; 69:30; Jonah 2:9; Heb. 13:15), something requiring forethought and careful mixture of the correct ingredients to be acceptable. In the light of all this it is absolutely impossible for uncontrolled emotion to be part of true praise. Israel were called out of Egypt in order to declare among the surrounding nations the character and greatness of Israel's God. In this calling to be a missionary nation they failed miserably (what similarities with the new Israel?). The very reason why we are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood (is) that we should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness (cp. Egypt)" (1 Pet. 2:9). Our separation from this world is therefore related to our praise of God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/1.htm>

Don't pray out of anxiety alone, but as part of a way of life. Daniel (Dan. 6:10) and David (Ps. 55:17; 119:164) prayed regularly; the incense (cp. prayer) was offered regularly. Daniel was even willing to forfeit his life for the sake of showing openly his devotion to this practice. 5 minutes in the morning and at lunch time and 20 minutes at night ought to be a minimum (plus before meals and the daily readings). Speaking of his regular morning prayers, David wrote: "In the morning will I order my prayer unto thee" (Ps. 5:3 RV). Again there is the suggestion that he planned out ('ordered') his words before saying them. Even Jesus seems to have prepared His words before praying them. Consider Jn. 12:27 RVmg: "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" . But it appears He decided against praying that.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-9how_to_improve_prayer.htm

Rom. 7,8

The context of Romans 8 teaches that there is in fact just one Spirit; the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God, and is "the Spirit" in the believer (Rom. 8:9-11). There is "one Spirit" (Eph. 4:4). If the will of God is in us, if His will is embedded in our conscience, we will ask what we will, what our spirit desires, and it will be granted. This is because if our Spirit is attune with the Spirit of God and of Christ, our desires, our wish, is transferred automatically to Him. Whatever we ask being in the name of Christ, being in His character and the essence of

His spirit, will therefore be done (Jn. 15:16). It doesn't mean that saying the words " I ask in the name of Christ" gives our request some kind of magical power with God. It must surely mean that if we are in Him, if His words abide in us, then we will surely be heard, for our will is His will. We are guaranteed answers if we ask in His name, if we ask what we will, if the word dwells in us, if we ask according to God's will... all these are essentially the same thing. If we are truly in Him, if the word really dwells in us, if our will has become merged with God's will, then we will only request things which are in accordance with His will, and therefore we will receive them. Thus the experience of answered prayer will become part of the atmosphere of spiritual life for the successful believer. The Lord knew that the Father heard Him always (Jn. 11:42). It is for this reason that the prayers of faithful men rarely make explicit requests; their prayers are an expression of the spirit of their lives and their relationship with God, not a list of requests. It explains why God sees our needs, He sees our situations, as if these are requests for help, and acts accordingly. The request doesn't have to be baldly stated; God sees and knows and responds.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm

Jan. 31

Ex. 3,4

" When Moses was grown, he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens...when he was full forty years old it came into his heart to visit his brethren...by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Ex. 2:11; Acts 7:23; Heb. 11:24). The implication seems to be that Moses reached a certain point of maturity, of readiness, and then he went to his brethren. God looked on the sorrows of His people through the sensitivity of Moses, He saw and knew their struggles, their sense of being trapped, their desire to revive spiritually but their being tied down by the painful business of life and living; and He sent Moses to deliver them from this. But these very words are quoted about our deliverance through the 'coming down' of the Lord Jesus (Ex. 3:7; 4:31 = Lk. 1:68).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-4Moses_As_A_Type_Of_Christ.htm

Note that the promise of Moses that God would not fail nor forsake Joshua, but would be with him (Dt. 31:8) was similar to the very promise given to Moses which he had earlier doubted (Ex. 3:12; 4:12,15). Such exhortation is so much the stronger from someone who has themselves doubted and then come to believe. We are to share God's encouragement to us with others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-1-1Moses_Our_Example.htm

Ps. 56,57

David really felt he had already received that which he prayed for. He shows this again by the way in which he uses tense moods perhaps purposefully ambiguously in Ps. 56:13. The AV has: "Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling...?", whereas the RV renders it: "Hast thou not delivered my feet from falling?". Another example is in Ps. 18:44,47: "The strangers shall submit themselves...God [right now, by faith in prayer] subdueth the peoples". David

perhaps perceived that the requests of prayer must also be some sort of statement that the prayer was answered already.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-4prayer_changes_things.htm

Not believing in God and not believing in His word of the Gospel are paralleled in 1 Jn. 5:10. God is His word. The word "is" God in that God is so identified with His word. David parallels trusting in God and trusting in His word (Ps. 56:3,4). By our words we personally will be condemned or justified- because we too 'are' our words.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/1-3-4the_word_was_god.htm

Rom. 9

Paul had the spirit of Moses when he could say that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his Jewish kinsmen. He was willing in theory to give up his salvation for them, even though he knew that in actual fact this is not the basis on which God works. He emphasizes that he is not using mere words: " I say the truth in Christ, I lie not [note the double emphasis], my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 9:1-3). The Holy Spirit confirmed that what he felt in his conscience for them was in fact valid; this really was the level of devotion Paul reached for a nation who systematically worked for his extermination, and even more painfully, for the infiltration and destruction of his lifetime's work.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/13Images_Of_Love_Of_Christ.htm

Feb. 1

Ex. 5,6

God had explained to Moses what He wished him to tell Pharaoh: "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God" (Ex. 3:18). But Moses actually doesn't say those exact words. Instead he says: "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness...The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Yahweh our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword" (Ex. 5:1,3). This seems perilously similar to the way in which Eve added to Yahweh's words when telling the serpent that actually, God had told Adam not to even touch the fruit. Moses appears to be painting Yahweh as somewhat draconian and threatening of him personally as well as Israel- as if to say 'Well sir, please do us this favour, or else our God is gonna get mad with us'. Perhaps this was actually how Moses misperceived Yahweh; or perhaps he added to Yahweh's words in order to make his appeal sound more plausible.

" And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (Ex. 6:12,30). Yet God had promised Moses earlier that Israel would hear him (3:18). God solemnly told him to go and speak to Pharaoh, because God had told him to do so. But Moses has the cheek to say exactly the same words to God a second time. In a chapter which speaks much of Moses' reluctance, the record encourages us: " These are that Aaron and Moses...these are they which spake to Pharaoh...these are that Moses and Aaron" (Ex. 6:26,27).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-2-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Moses.htm

Ps. 58,59

David asks God to openly show His judgments now , so that men will glorify Him as they will in the end (Ps. 58:11). David understood that God will arise in judgment, but He can arise and judge our cause now (Ps. 7:6; 35:23,24). In some cases, He does judge now. He has judged and condemned in the past (e.g. 2 Pet. 2:6). And David, in his humanity, asked for God to work like this. As to why God sometimes shows His judgment now, and yet generally reserves the revelation of His judgments to the last day is a deep issue. And yet one response could be that this is in order to teach us what the future judgment will be like, and the basis upon which it will be conducted.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_1.htm

Ps. 59 is an example of David composing a Psalm in the heat of the moment- it was written, according to the [inspired] introduction, whilst Saul's men were watching his house planning to kill him. And there he was in his bedroom, praying and composing a Psalm...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/7-2david_and_the_ziphites.htm

Rom. 10,11

Our word of preaching can bring others to faith. Our preaching leads to faith being created in the hearers. "The word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8) is the word (Gospel) that leads to faith; and a man cannot believe without hearing the Gospel, and he will not hear it unless it is preached by a preacher. Paul summarises by saying that faith comes by hearing [the Gospel] and hearing by [the preaching of] the word of God (Rom. 10:8,14,17). Paul's point is that whoever believes will be saved (Rom. 9:33)- and therefore, we must preach to all, so that they might take advantage of this blessed opportunity. In his repetitious manner, Paul builds up the argument in this letter:

- Even under the law, Israel could believe God's word as preached by Moses and have righteousness imputed to them (10:5-8)

- We preach, in essence, the very same word (10:9,10)

- Isaiah said the same: that belief of his preaching would result in justification (10:11)
- We preach the same. Whoever believes in the Lord's saving Name by baptism will be saved (10:12,13)
- Therefore preach the word, for without your doing this, people can never believe it and therefore be saved (10:14,15)
- Israel had heard the word of the cross preached in the past, so just hearing the preacher will not automatically result in faith (10:16-21). Both preacher and hearer must be aware of this. Therefore there was a need for the preachers to turn to another wider audience, i.e. the Gentiles.

Note that this passage in Romans 10 reasons that men will only hear the Gospel if there is a preacher, and yet it also states that all men have heard the Gospel, in fulfilment of the prophesy of Psalm 19 that the message would go into all the earth. But later in the same epistle, Paul says that he preached because he wanted to take the Gospel to those "who have not heard" (15:21). There must be a connection within his thought with what he wrote in chapter 10, about all men hearing the Gospel through preaching. Surely he understood that the fulfilment of the prophecy that all men will hear the Gospel is purely dependent upon our freewill effort to preach to all men. This understanding inspired Paul to press ahead with his plans to expand Gospel work into Spain; and it should motivate us likewise.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-6bringing_people_to_faith.htm

Feb. 2

Ex. 7,8

The record of the miracles is framed to show God commanding Moses to do certain things to bring and end the plagues, and him obedient to this. But Ex. 8:9 RV contains a strange sentence: "Have thou this glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee...to destroy the frogs?". It could be that, in the words of Bro. Mark Vincent, "Moses with an excessive and sarcastic politeness, is asking, 'And (pray tell me!) when exactly would you like the frogs to be gone?', as though Pharaoh might miss them and fondly wish them to stay around for a couple more days". This to me doesn't score very highly in spiritual terms. Is such sarcasm really spirituality?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-2-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Moses.htm

Isaiah 19 lists various judgments on Egypt, packed with allusions to the situation at the time of the Ex.dus (e.g. their turning to workers of false miracles, v.3), and then says that at this time " the land of Judah shall be a terror to the land of Egypt...in that day shall five citites in the land of Egypt speake the language of Canaan...in that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt...and the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord" (v. 18-21),

exactly as they were made to at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 7:5; 14:4,18). Clearly enough, the events of the Exodus are typical of the latter day deliverance of Israel.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/5.htm>

Ps. 60,61

True prayer really will be heard; God 'hearing' is an idiom for Him answering (e.g. 1 Sam. 7:9; Is. 30:19; 65:24). Indeed, "hear me" in the AV is often translated "answer me" in the RV (e.g. Ps. 60:5; Mic. 3:4)- there is an intentional double meaning in the Hebrew word. There should be real comfort for us in knowing that prayer really is 'heard'; the hearing is, in a sense, the answer / response, with which a man should be content. Therefore David desired to praise God even before the answer was received; the knowledge God was really hearing him gave such confidence (Ps. 108:1-6; 109:30).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-4prayer_changes_things.htm

There are links between the concept of 'truth' and the cross. In Ps. 60:4 God's Truth is displayed on the banner (s.w. "pole", on which the snake was lifted up). John struggled with words, even under inspiration, to get over to us the tremendous truth and reality of what he witnessed at the cross (Jn. 19:35). God is the ultimate Truth, and the cross was the ultimate declaration of His Truth.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-10Introverted_Christians.htm

Rom. 12

The description of the believer as a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1) alludes to the scapegoat, the only living sacrifice, which was a type of the risen Lord (Lev. 16:10 LXX = Acts 1:3). As the Lord ran free in His resurrection, bearing away the sins of men, so we who are in Him and preach that salvation can do the same.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-1What_It_Means_To_Be_In_Christ.html

Feb. 3

Ex. 9

The exceeding great plague of hail was one of the plagues which lead to Israel's passover deliverance (Ex. 9:22), and yet this is the language of the last days (Rev. 16:21)- as if there will again be a Passover deliverance for God's people, heralded by the pouring out of plagues upon those who persecute them.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/5.htm>

Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 7:22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,34,35). And yet God

hardened his heart (Ex. 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:8). The references to God hardening Pharaoh's heart generally occur after Pharaoh had first hardened his own heart. The fact Pharaoh hardened his heart was a sin (Ex. 9:34), and yet God encouraged him in this. God offered Pharaoh a way of escape after each of the plagues; all he had to do was to agree to let Israel go. But the conditions got tougher the longer he resisted God's demand: he finally had to not only let Israel go, but also provide them with sacrifices (Ex. 10:25). Likewise when Nebuchadnezzar lifted his heart up, God hardened it (Dan. 5:20). God is waiting to confirm us in our mental attitudes.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-11The_Downward_Spiral.html

Ps. 62,63

God has 'spoken twice', an idiom for Divine emphasis upon something, that all power belongs to Him, God is omnipotent- and exactly because of this, David says, we should not set our heart upon riches if they happen to increase (Ps. 62:10,11). As the world economy develops more and more wealth, increase in riches is a temptation which faces many believers, both relatively rich and relatively poor, in most countries of the world. I'd guess that well over 50% of Christians have experienced an increase in riches over the past 20 years. The temptation is of course to 'set our heart' upon them, and the illusion of freedom which increased wealth brings. This most insidious temptation, David says, can be overcome by a deep sense of how important it is to believe that all power is of God alone. This means that money is not equal to power; because all power is of God. Don't set your heart upon money because power is from God... these simple, inspired words dramatically torpedo this world's most crucial principle: that money = power. It doesn't. Quite simply, because all power is of God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-5God_Is_Omnipotent.htm

The trial of our faith is going on now; the judgment will simply formally reveal the verdict which is now being arrived at. The Father judges now "according to every man's work" (1 Pet. 1:17), as He did in OT times: "Thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Ps. 62:12). Yet when His Son returns, He will give every man "according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). It couldn't be clearer: the judgment is going on now, and the Lord Jesus returns to give us the reward which has been 'judged' appropriate for us. We make the answer now- God is watching and judging today, the court is in progress.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_1.htm

Rom. 13,14

We should live now in the same joy and righteousness as if we were in the

Kingdom. "The day (of the Kingdom) is at hand: let us therefore...walk honestly, as in the day" (Rom.13:12,13), i.e. as if we are now living in the Kingdom which is soon to come.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/james_d04.html

Feb. 4

Ex. 10

Israel in Egypt had light, but Egypt was in darkness (Ex. 10:23). And yet later, at the time of the Exodus, it was the Angel in the pillar of cloud and fire that gave light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptian pursuers. One possible conclusion could be that the guardian Angel of each Israelite was physically with them at the time of the plague of darkness, giving them light and yet darkness to the Egyptians.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels6_1.htm

The prodigal son hadn't quite learnt the lesson when he decided to return home. He decided to return and ask to be made "as one of your skilled craftsmen" (Lk. 15:19 Gk.- he uses *misthios* rather than *doulos*, the usual word for 'slave'). Presumably he figured that he could work and pay off what he had wasted. His plan was to use the phrase "I have sinned against heaven and against you" (Lk. 15:18)- but this is almost quoting verbatim from Pharaoh's words of insincere repentance in Ex. 10:16! He still failed to grasp that he was his father's son- he didn't 'get it', that this would be the basis of his salvation, rather than a master-servant relationship with his father based on hard work. It was the father's amazing grace which swept him off his feet just along the street from his father's home; it was the father's unconditional acceptance of him which made him realize what sonship and repentance was really all about.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a2-5The_Elder_Brother.htm

Ps. 64,65

Prayer is perhaps the area where it is easiest to have only a surface level of spirituality, without getting down to real faith, real perseverance in prayer, real wrestling with God. Elijah "prayed in his prayer" (James 5:17 AVmg.) reflects the Spirit's recognition that there is prayer, and real prayer. "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer" (Ps. 64:1) seems to say the same: there is our true, pleading voice: and the outward form of prayer. The form of words we use, the outward form, conceals the real thing; the real groaning of spirit which is counted by God as the real prayer.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-5real_prayer.htm

The Bible could not be clearer in its analysis of gossip in the church. It is like shooting an arrow from a secret place at a person (Ps. 64:4 RV). It is no coincidence that the word translated "devil" essentially means a false accuser, a slanderer (so it is translated in 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3). Slandering others is the very epitome of all

that is wrong with the flesh.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-4-1Gossip_In_The_Church.htm

Rom. 15,16

Rom. 15:21 quotes Is. 52:15, a Messianic prophecy about Jesus. Paul appropriates a prophecy of how the news of the crucified Christ would spread to those who had never heard it. He didn't just read those verses as prophecy; he saw in them an imperative to fulfil them. This is an example of where prophecy depends to some extent upon us to fulfil it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

Feb. 5

Ex. 11,12

The Hebrew text says that " a great mixture" of people " went up also" with Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38). There can be no doubt that this refers to the many references in the promises that the seed would come to include such a " mixed multitude" (Gen. 17:6; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3,14; 35:11), thereby showing that by reason of leaving Egypt and passing through the Red Sea these Gentiles became part of the seed (cp. 1 Cor. 10:1; Gal. 3:27-29). But the supreme fulfilment of these promises will be after the 'Red Sea' of the last days.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/5.htm>

Ex. 12:10 implies they spent the whole night eating the meal as zealously as possible, because the aim was not to have any left by the morning. So we must make the maximum possible use of the spiritual help and forgiveness given in Christ, before the morning of His coming is here and it is too late to gain help. Dt. 16:7 also indicates the whole night was spent eating: " Thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the lord shall chose; and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents" . On this first occasion, they literally left Egypt that same night. The sense of urgency and intensity is hard to miss, yet so difficult to replicate in our own experience. And yet we are either in Egypt, or redeemed. At this moment in time, your name is either in the book of life or not. You either have unforgiven sins hanging over you or you don't. Now is the time as soon as possible to repent, to gain full forgiveness, to gain full freedom with God. They ate the feast standing up, terrified of Egypt as we are of sin, awed by the sense of the presence of God, as we should be the presence of Christ Himself in the midst of us gathered here. Likewise Hezekiah's people ate the feast with their minds prepared, or standing up. The very meaning of the words used in this chapter indicate the sense of intensity; they were to strike the blood on the door, to 'lay hand on' the blood, to grasp; the word is used in the Law about a rapist ceasing or kidnapping his victim. That's the intensity we must have in seizing Christ's sacrifice, or as the N.T. puts it 'apprehending' that for

which we are apprehended, taking our place in the Kingdom almost by violence, taking hold of it by force. And that's just what the phrase in v.21 means- " draw out a lamb" - seize hold of one. And so like the drowning men and women we are, we grab hold of the lifebelt of Christ and cling to Him. He is the only way to save us from our sins, from the bondage and death of Egypt.

The eating of the meal with girded loins (Ex. 12:11,13) is seen by Peter as meaning we should have our minds girded, gathered up, in place and order (1 Pet. 1:13). Note how 1 Peter is replete with Passover allusions (1:17 cp. sojourning with fear in Egypt; 1:18 silver and gold taken from Egypt; 1:19 the Passover lamb; 1:23 corruptible seed= leaven; 2:9,10 cp. leaving Egypt at night, led from darkness to the glory of Sinai, where they became a nation.

Yet it was not all fear and intensity. Ex. 12:11 says they were to eat in haste. The Hebrew word translated " haste" is only ever used in the context of the Passover; it comes from the word for the weasel, because of its sense of quick, smooth, gliding motion. There was to be no panic in their leaving Egypt, but calmness. It is a different word to that used in Ex. 12:33, where we read that the Egyptians sent the people out in haste; this is a different word, implying fear on the part of the Egyptians, a desire to rush the people out in panic. So in our leaving of the flesh, we must not be driven by a sense of panic and fear of rejection, but above all by a gliding, ever flowing love of God's commands.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-1passover_and_breaking_of_bread.htm

Ps. 66,67

The Psalms so often encourage Israelites to feel as if they personally had been through the Red Sea experience. Generation would tell to generation the Passover story, and would also sing of God's greatness as Israel did in Ex. 15 (Ps. 145:5-7). Hence: "He turned the sea into dry land...there let us (AV: did we) rejoice in him" (Ps. 66:6 RVmg.). We too are enabled by Scripture to feel as if we were there, and to rejoice in what God did for us there. This of course depends upon our sense of solidarity with God's people over time, as well as over space.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-7how_to_study_the__bible.htm

The fact that God "holds our soul in life", a reference to Gen. 2:7, means that David wanted to "make the voice of his praise to be heard" (Ps. 66:8,9). This was the meaning of the basic facts of creation for David!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp10.htm>

Mk. 1

No delay for anything was possible in the light of the knife-edge urgency of sharing Christ with others. And it was whilst Simon and Andrew were in the very act of

casting their net into the sea, snap shotted in a freeze-frame of still life, silhouetted against the sea and hills of Galilee, that the Lord calls them to go preaching (Mk. 1:17). The Lord surely intended them to [at least later] figure out His allusion to Jer. 16:14-16, which prophesied that fishermen would be sent out to catch Israel and bring them home to the Father. And He called them to do that, right in the very midst of everyday life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/20-3urgent_response_to_the_gospel.htm

Feb. 6

Ex. 13,14

The breaking of bread is the New Covenant's equivalent of the Passover feast. The Passover meal was in order to remember the great salvation which God had wrought for all Israel at the Red Sea. Egypt, representing the power of sin, was gloriously vanquished there. Yet the faithful Israelite of all ages was to also proclaim that " This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Ex. 13:8). Our memorial meeting has this same two fold structure; remembering the deliverance which God wrought for us personally, as well as for the whole community of the redeemed. This is why at the breaking of bread there ought to be an awareness of personal fellowship with God, and also with each other, and with those who have gone before.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7importance_breaking_of_bread.htm

The work of our guardian Angel is so over-ruled that they will never tempt us above what we are able to bear. The trials they chose for us are in accordance to the spiritual strength they know we possess- thus the Angel leading Israel through the wilderness "led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines; for God (the Angel leading them) said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness" (Ex. 13:17,18). So we see the great fear our guardian Angel has that we will return to Egypt (the flesh), and therefore He gives us trials which will prevent this, although at the time we feel like Israel that the trials are actually enough to make us want to return to the world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels8_1.htm

Ps. 68

Through meaningful fellowship with our brethren we will find those relationships which we have given up compensated for, even if we aren't physically close to our brethren. In reference to Israel's deliverance from Egypt we read: "God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains" (Ps. 68:6). To be set in a new family is paralleled with being brought out from slavery. Part of the process of our redemption is that we are set in a new ecclesial family. This must be a reference to how Israel were brought out on Passover night, where the families and lonely ones had to join together into households big enough to kill a lamb for.

The implication of Ps. 68 could be that it was in these family groups that they travelled through the wilderness. The N.C.V. reads: "God is in his holy Temple. He is a father to orphans, and he defends the widows. God gives the lonely a home. He leads prisoners out with joy...". The very house / family of God becomes the house / family of the lonely. Hence the ecclesia is the house of God (1 Cor. 3:16). We find true family in the new family of God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/23.htm>

We have a tendency to consider God as passive to our failures and acts of righteousness, simply because His judgments are not openly manifest. We may forget that on, say, 6.6.96 we swore under our breath in anger...but God, in this sense, doesn't forget. The passage of time doesn't act as a pseudo-atonement for Him as it does in our consciences. The tendency for human beings to assume that God forgets our wrong actions and will never judge them is frequently commented upon in Scripture. "They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness", i.e. to judge them for it at a future date (Hos. 7:2). The day of judgment is likened to God 'awaking' (Ps. 68:1; 73:20). Not that He is now sleeping; but then, the principles of His judgment which now appear to lie dormant will be openly manifested.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

Mk. 2

"When Jesus saw the faith of the friends, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mk. 2:5). That man was healed for the sake of the faith of others. The widow woman's son was resurrected because God heard Elijah's faithful prayer (1 Kings 17:22); and thus Heb. 11:35 alludes to this incident by saying that through faith- in this case, the faith of Elijah, a third party- women received their dead raised to life. The Centurion's servant was healed for the sake of his faith; Jairus' daughter was healed because of his faith (Mk. 5:36). Hence the Lord told them to believe and stop wavering, so that she would be made whole, or "saved" (Lk. 8:50).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

Feb. 7

Ex. 15

Moses' song of triumph after the Red Sea deliverance shows a fine spirituality. However, note his possible misunderstanding in Ex. 15:13,17- that Siani was to be "the place" where God would dwell with Israel. How "pure" is our understanding...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-2-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Moses.htm

The language of inheritance (e.g. 1 Pet. 1:4) and preparation of reward (Mt. 25:34; Jn. 14:1) in the NT is alluding to this OT background of the land being prepared by the Angels for Israel to inherit (Ex. 15:17 Heb.; 23:20; Ps. 68:9,10 Heb.) . We must be careful not to think that our promised inheritance is only eternal life; it is something being personally prepared for each of us. The language of preparation seems inappropriate if our reward is only eternal life. The husbandman produces fruit which is appropriate to his labours, and so our eternal future and being will be a reflection of our labours now (Heb. 6:7). Not that salvation depends upon our works: it is the free, gracious gift of God. But the nature of our eternity will be a reflection of our present efforts as well as those of the Father, Son and Angels, in preparing it for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-2Relationships_In_The_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

Ps. 69

The pain and difficulty of speech in the position of crucifixion was such that it is apparent that the Lord meant us to hear and meditate upon the words He uttered from the cross. Perhaps it would have been far easier for Him to have prayed those words to Himself, within His own thoughts; but instead He made the effort to speak them out loud. The passion of the Lord's intercessions on the cross is matchless. He roared to God in His prayer, regardless of whether there was light or darkness (Ps. 22:1,2). He reflected there that His prayer was offered to God " in an acceptable time" (Ps. 69:13). And yet this very passage is taken up in 2 Cor. 6:2 concerning the necessary vigour of our crying to God for salvation. That the intensity of the Lord's prayerfulness and seeking of God on the cross should be held up as our pattern: the very height of the ideal is wondrous.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-7Father_Forgive_Them.htm

Christ felt forsaken by God, and Biblically, without a doubt, being forsaken by God means you are a sinner. " Why (oh why) hast Thou forsaken me?" is surely the Lord Jesus searching His conscience with desperate intensity, finding nothing wrong, and crying to God to show Him where He had failed, why the Father had forsaken Him. It may be that initially He assumed He had sinned (Ps. 69:5), going through the self-doubt which David went through at the time of Absalom's rebellion (Ps. 3:2). As David had felt then that God had cast him off, even though " my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail" , so the Lord felt (Ps. 89:33,38). But then with an unsurpassedly rigorous self-examination, He came to know that He really hadn't. This means that once over the crisis, our Lord died with a purity of conscience known by no other being, with a profound sense of His own totality of righteousness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-11Why_Forsaken_Me.htm

Mk. 3

When she stands outside the house asking to speak with Jesus, Mary is identified

with her other children who considered Jesus crazy. Jesus says that His mothers are those who hear the word of God and do it. This must have so cut her. There is a rather unpleasant connection between Mk. 3:32 “they stood without” and Mark 4:11 “unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables” . And further, Lk. 13:25 speaks of how the rejected shall stand without [same words] knocking and asking to speak with the Lord. Mk. 3:20 RVmg. says that Jesus came home- i.e. to the family home in Nazareth, and it turned out that the interested visitors took the house over, with His relatives, mother, brothers, sisters etc. left outside (Mk. 3:21 RVmg.). No wonder the point was made that He now had a new family; and His natural family, Mary amongst them, resented it.

The incident of Mary and her other children coming to Jesus is inserted by Mark in the context of his record that the Scribes concluded that He had “an unclean spirit”. In that same context, we read that Mary and His brothers concluded that He was “beside himself” (Mk. 3:21,22). The language of demon / unclean spirit possession is used in the Gospels to describe mental rather than physical illness. The Scribes thought that Jesus was demon possessed; His family and mother thought He was mentally ill. The two thoughts are parallel, as if to imply that His family had been influenced by the prevailing opinion of the elders about Him. The Lord responded to the Scribes by warning them that they ran the risk of blaspheming the Holy Spirit by saying this of Him. And it would appear that His own mother may have been running the same risk. This is such a tragic difference from the young, spiritually minded woman who was so convinced that her Son was indeed Messiah and the uniquely begotten Son of God. And it happened simply because she was influenced by what others thought of Jesus, rather than what she had learnt from the word and experienced herself. It’s a powerful warning to us.

In Mk. 3:21,31-35 we read of how “his own” family thought He was crazy and came to talk to Him. Then we read that it was His mother and brothers who demanded an audience with Him, perhaps linking Mary with her other children. Their cynicism of Jesus, their lack of perception of Him, came to influence her- for He effectively rebuffs her special claims upon Him by saying that His mother and brethren are all who hear God’s word. The parallel Mt. 12:46-50 five times repeats the phrase “his mother and his brethren”, as if to link her with them. Clearly the brothers, who didn’t believe in Jesus (Jn. 7:5) influenced her. When He speaks of how His real family are those who hear the word of God and do it, the Lord is alluding to Dt. 33:9, where we have the commendation of Levi for refusing to recognize his apostate brethren at the time of the golden calf: “Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren...for they [Levi] have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant”. The last sentence is the essence of the Lord’s saying that His true family are those who keep God’s word and do it. The strong implication of the allusion is that the Lord felt that His mother and brethren had committed some kind of apostasy.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-3-4Mary_And_Her_Other_Children.htm

Feb. 8

Ex. 16

Israel's murmurings about the lack of food did not discourage Moses; " the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: for what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord" (Ex. 16:8). Here we see real humility in Moses, due to his appreciation of God manifestation in him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-2-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Moses.htm

The manna represented the word of God and the salvation which comes through its revelation of Christ (Jn. 6). Israel could gather it on six days of the week, but not on the seventh. The seventh day represents the Millennium / Kingdom (cp. how the manna ceased as soon as they entered Canaan, representing the Kingdom). Yet on the seventh day Israel sought to collect manna (Ex. 16:27), but found none- as the foolish virgins of the new Israel will seek the oil of the word when it is no longer available. Now is the time to gather it!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_3.htm

Ps. 70,71

One key aspect in perceiving the value of persons is to separate the person from their behaviour, the sinner from their sin, so that we can still love them. The way David treats Absalom is a great example. He clearly loved him, as the historical records make so abundantly clear. And yet the Psalms open another window into how David perceived Absalom. He describes him as "the cruel man" and invites God's judgments upon him (Ps. 71:4 etc.). Yet he could do this whilst still loving Absalom the person.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-9grieving_for_others.htm

The greatest fear within a righteous man is that of sinning. There are many Messianic Psalms in which David, in the spirit of Christ, speaks of His fear of being forsaken by God- e.g. " Forsake me not...O God, forsake me not" (Ps. 71:9,18). When we feel that what we feared has come upon us, we need to know that Christ's panic-attack on the cross that He had sinned and been forsaken enables Him to know how we feel.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-11Why_Forsaken_Me.htm

Mk. 4

Understanding and perceiving the meaning of the parables would result in conversion, repentance and forgiveness (Mk. 4:12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-4Are_Christians_Too_Academic.htm

Feb. 9

Ex. 17,18

Moses becomes reconciled to his ex-wife Zipporah whom he had divorced, and has the humility to accept the advice of his ex-father in law Jethro. This all reveals how Moses' humility developed, as ours ought to over time. Moses accepts Jethro's advice on the basis that he will "surely wear away" (Ex. 18:18); even though his natural strength never abated (Dt. 34:7), and God surely would not have asked him to do the impossible. Jethro at this time seems to have seen Yahweh as only one of many gods; he was a pagan priest. He prophesied that if Moses followed his advice, "all this people shall go to their place in peace" - which they didn't. Yet Moses showed humility in dealing with advice which had incorrect aspects to it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-2-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Moses.htm

Uplifted hands are something consistently- and frequently associated with intense prayer, often for the forgiveness of God's people Israel (Lam. 2:19; 2 Chron. 6:12,13; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 28:2; 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8). The only time we read of Moses lifting up his hands elsewhere is in Ex. 9:2,8,29, where his spreading out of his hands is made parallel with his intreating of God to lift the plagues on Egypt. In passing, let's not read those records as implying that Moses simply uttered a few words to God, and then each of the plagues was lifted. There was an element of real fervency in Moses' prayers- which may well be lacking in ours. This is surely an example of genuinely praying for our enemies (perhaps it is the Old Testament source of Christ's words in Mt.5:44?). It must be significant that uplifted hands is also related to a confirmation of God's covenant (see especially Ez. 20:5,6,15,23,28,42; 36:7; 47:14); for this is exactly what Christ did on the cross. And in a sense, this is what was happening in Ex.17; Israel had sinned, God had forgiven them, and was reconfirming the covenant through Moses (notice that one of the terms of the covenant was that God would save Israel from their enemies, e.g. Amalek). John's Gospel has many references to Moses, as catalogued elsewhere. When John records the death of the Lord with two men either side of Him, he seems to do so with his mind on the record of Moses praying with Aaron and Hur on each side of him (Ex. 17:12). John's account in English reads: "They crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one" (Jn. 19:18). Karl Delitzsch translated the Greek New Testament into Hebrew, and the Hebrew phrase he chose to use here is identical with that in Ex. 17:12.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-7Moses_And_Amalek.htm

Ps. 72

Stranded for a while with only my Bible, I read through the Psalms and other well known prayers, underlining those verses which make specific request, and trying to divide the requests into groups. The Psalms, of course, are the greatest collection of prayers which we have. Some sections of the Psalter are evidently more devoted to praise than prayer. However, Book 2 of Psalms (42-72) is entitled "the prayers of David" (Ps. 72:20). And there are some Psalms which are specifically entitled

'prayers' (38, 86, 90/91, 102, 142/3); and it has been demonstrated by several writers that the titles of the Psalms are inspired and should be read as such.

The results were as follows:

" The prayers of David" (Ps. 42 - 72): 1 request every 7 verses.

The specific 'prayers' recorded in Psalms: 1 request every 5 verses.

Christ's prayer in Jn. 17: 1 request every 4 verses.

It was quite amazing how very few personal requests were made in any of these prayers, although evidently one senses that often David had in mind a particular crisis. Prayer isn't to be simply a list of requests- it is communication with God, and the requests are largely for others, and for the coming of His Kingdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-2prayer_a_list_of_requests.htm

Mk. 5

The Lord Jesus, in His ministry, had forbidden the extroverts from publicly preaching about Him, as they naturally wanted to (e.g. Mk. 8:26). To keep silent was an act of the will for them, something against the grain. It is hard to find any other explanation for why He told Jairus not to tell anyone that He had raised his daughter (Lk. 8:56)- for it would have been obvious, surely. For they knew she had died (8:53). By contrast, those who would naturally have preferred to stay quiet were told to go and preach (e.g. Mk. 5:19). Our witness to Christ, therefore, is going to be quite against the grain of our natures and natural personality types.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/10Taking_Up_The_Cross.htm

Feb. 10

Ex. 19,20

The way Moses sees Israel as far more righteous than they were reflects the way the Lord imputes righteousness to us. He says that Israel didn't go near the mountain because they were afraid of the fire (Dt. 5:5), whereas Ex. 19:21-24 teaches that Israel at that time were not so afraid of the fire, and were quite inclined to break through the dividing fence and gaze in unspiritual fascination at a theophany which was beyond them. And today, righteousness is being imputed to us too by a Lord who loves us even more than Moses.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-3-1Themes_Of_Moses_In_Deuteronomy.htm

Hebrews 12:25-29 goes on to draw a parallel between the voice of the Lord's blood and the sound of the earthquake and voice of God when the Old Covenant was

inaugurated, a noise that made even Moses exceedingly fear and quake (Ex. 19:18 LXX). The voice of the Lord's blood shakes all things, the only thing unshaken by it is the Hope of the Kingdom. It shows forth, as a voice, God's righteousness (Rom. 3:25,26 RV). When 1 Cor. 1:18 speaks of "the preaching (Gk. 'the word') of the cross", we have the same idea; the word of the cross, the word which is the cross, preaches to us of itself, as we behold it. This is how powerful reflection on the cross should be for us.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Ps. 73

The rejected will of their own volition slink away from the face of their Lord. And yet the rejected are often described, both explicitly and in the types of judgment, as actively fleeing from the Lord's presence, and being cast and thrown by Him into condemnation. Korah and the rebels slipped down into the pit and were then cast down into destruction (Ps. 73:18; v. 17 refers to Num. 16:38,39). The rejected condemn themselves (as they did in their lives)- they slink away of themselves, of their own volition they end up fleeing, and yet all this is fulfilling the Lord's own fiat that they should be chased from Him. God wants to save us; the condemned will have condemned themselves.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_6.htm

Asaph reflected upon the fate of the wicked within Israel: " Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction... Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee" (Ps. 73:17-22). On entering " the sanctuary" , he saw the plates around the altar, which were all that was left of Korah's rebellion. " Thus my heart was grieved" - for the tragedy of that rebellion, for the tragedy of men experiencing Divine condemnation. He didn't gloat over the punishment of the wicked. He grieved for it; it pricked his conscience, right within the depths of his being (" pricked in my reins"). Do we have a heart that bleeds for the tragedy of others' condemnation and eternal deaths?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-4loving_our_brethren.htm

Mk. 6

The Talmud and other Jewish writings record the charge that Jesus was the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier. He would surely have been teased as a child about His father. It has been suggested that the title "son of Mary" given to Him in Mk. 6:3 implied that they considered Him illegitimate- for men were usually called by their father's name. "'Jesus, son of Mary" has a pejorative sense...[there is a] Jewish principle: A man is illegitimate when he is called by his mother's name" (Raymond Brown, *The Birth Of The Messiah*, New York: Doubleday, 1993 p. 540).

The perception of the surrounding world may have influenced Joseph, and must have surely given rise to at least temptations of doubt within Mary as the years went by.

To my mind, one of the most artless and surpassing things about the Lord was that He lived a sinless life for 30 years, and yet when He began His ministry those He lived with were shocked that He could ever be the Messiah. He was “in favour” with men (Lk. 2:52), not despised and resented as many righteous men have been. He was the carpenter, a good guy- but not Son of God. Somehow He showed utter perfection in a manner which didn’t distance ordinary people from Him. There was no ‘other-wordliness’ to Him which we so often project to those we live with. We seem to find it hard to live a good life without appearing somehow distasteful to those around us. In fact the villagers were scandalized [skandalizein] that Jesus should even be a religious figure; they had never noticed His wisdom, and wondered where He had suddenly gotten it from (Mk. 6:2,3). This suppression of His specialness, His uniqueness, must have been most disarming and confusing to Mary. Her son appeared as an ordinary man; there was no halo around His head, no special signs. Just an ordinary guy.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-3-5Mary_In_MidLife_Crisis.htm

Feb. 11

Ex. 21

The idea of the Samaritan [= Jesus] taking care for the man is expressed in the language of Ex. 21:19, which says that if a man wounds another, "he shall pay...and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed". This somewhat odd allusion (at first sight) surely indicates that the Lord took upon Himself the full blame for our stricken condition, presumably in the sense that as the second Adam He took upon Himself the guilt of Adam. This is why there are so many connections between His death and the effects of Adam's sin (e.g. the crown of thorns, the Garden etc.). The way Christ compared Himself to a Samaritan, half Jew and half Gentile, shows that especially on the cross, this is how He felt. He was mindful of both Jewish and Gentile aspects of His future body as He died. The Jews (and His own brothers, Ps. 69:8) treated Him as half Gentile (from a Roman soldier, the Midrash claims).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-6Lord_Of_The_Cross.html

Remember the Lord's story about the little boy who falls down the well. The legalistic mind would have gone straight to Ex. 21:33: the man who dug a well and didn't cover it was responsible for any deaths arising from it. The story would imply that the father of the child was the owner of the well. The Lord doesn't draw the lesson that it's your own fault for being disobedient to the Law. He focuses instead on the need to act urgently to save, without maxing out on the issue of whose fault it was that the tragedy had occurred.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15Heart_That_Bleeds.htm

Ps. 74

Even the fact other believers had received answered prayers inspired David's faith in prayer (Ps. 74:11-15; 106).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

God created matter. Ultimately, all that exists was made by Him; and by faith we believe that things which now exist were not made from what already existed apart from God. The Genesis record of creation, however, emphasises how God brought order out of chaos. He brought this present world of beauty and order out of a darkness that brooded upon a sea, and from an earth that was "without form and void", the Hebrew images behind the words implying 'a chaos'. The frequent references to the earth and sea 'bringing forth' (e.g. Gen. 1:12,24) use a Hebrew word which means 'to let something which is within to come out'. The present world was created by a re-organization of things which existed in some form before. This means that when our own lives, or the collective life of God's people, appears to be in chaos- then we can in faith reflect that God has brought beautiful order out of chaos, and He can likewise powerfully bring order to what seems hopeless. This is the context of the creation allusions in the laments of Ps. 74:12-17; 89:10-15; Is. 51:9 etc.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3-1Genesis_And_Creation_Myths.htm

Mk. 7

The mother of the sick girl got healing for her daughter: " For this saying [of faith and understanding] go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter" (Mk. 7:29). In fact there are quite a number of other examples of where the Lord does things for a person because of the faith of others (Mk. 5:22; 7:24; 9:14; Jn. 4:45). In other words, He regards intercession as of similar validity to the petitions of the person involved. The implications of this, the demands upon our prayer life for others, are amazing. Martin Luther commented that anyone serious about pastoral work should be spending three hours / day on their knees in prayer. I thought that this was just so much theory, until I got to know a missionary who spent around two hours / day on his knees.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/9-4power_of_preaching.htm

Feb. 12

Ex. 22

When you perceive an opportunity to do the Lord's service, respond immediately. See it as another opportunity for "redeeming the time". This is a major Biblical theme. Israel were not to delay in offering their firstfruits to God (Ex. 22:29), lest their intentions weren't translated into practice.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-3Redeeming_The_Time.htm

The Lord Jesus didn't come to destroy the Law of Moses. It still stood when He gave His teaching (Mt. 5:38). Yet He said that instead of insisting upon an eye for an eye in situations like a pregnant woman having a deformed child because of the violence of a man, she should instead try to forgive him (Ex. 22:22-24). He was not changing the Law, as some have wrongly thought. He was saying that the Law was capable of being lived on different levels, and that some aspects of it were a concession to human weakness. Thus the woman with a deformed child could legitimately express her anger by insisting on the physical deformation of the man who had attacked her during pregnancy; but this, the Lord was saying, can give way to a higher level: simply forgive the man.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Ps. 75,76

God is right now enthroned as judge of our lives (Mt. 5:34; Ps. 93:2). We are now in God's presence, and can't escape from it (Ps. 139:2); and the presence of God is judgment language (Acts 3:19; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2:19; Jude 24; Rev. 14:10). "God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" in His mind (Ps. 75:7)- although the final putting down and setting up will be at the judgment seat (the basis for the parable of the man being asked to go up higher, Lk. 14:10).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

It is noteworthy that the rebuke of Sennacherib's Assyrian invasion is celebrated in language which alludes to that used about the destruction of Gog and Pharaoh (e.g. Ps.76:6=Ex.15:1; Ez.39:20), suggesting that the final invasions of Israel will summarize those of all her old enemies. And God's final deliverance of her will have been typified by scores of like interventions in time past. In the Middle East today we see Biblical history repeating itself, working out all these types and shadows.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/8-2.htm>

Mk. 8

“From whence shall we get bread here in the wilderness?” is how Peter / Mark recorded their question to the Lord (Mk. 8:4). But the wording is so very similar to the LXX of Ex. 16:3, where a faithless Israel asked the same of Moses; and Moses responded, as did the Lord, in providing bread from Heaven. Did the disciples actually say those words? Would they really have said the very words which Israel did in one of their lowest ebbs of faith and understanding? My suggestion is that they did indeed say something similar in essence, but Mark / Peter purposefully recorded it in terms which highlight the similarity with unbelieving Israel- to as it were emphasize how weak the disciples were at that point. We too are disciples of

the Lord- despite our huge weakness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-8Preaching_Of_The_Twelve.htm

Feb. 13

Ex. 23

We can make others sin (Ex. 23:33; 1 Sam. 2:24; 1 Kings 16:19). There is an urgent imperative here, to really watch our behaviour; e.g. to not drink alcohol in the presence of a brother whose conscience is weak.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

Moses encouraged Joshua (and all uncertain journeyers through the wilderness) by commenting on the great work of the Angels in preparing the way to enter the promised land. There is a connection made between the fear of God among the Canaanite nations, the "hornet", and the Angel: "I send an Angel before thee. . . I will send my fear before thee. . . and I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee" (Ex. 23:21,27,28). Moses recalled how God had said to him "The LORD thy God He will go over before thee", and then said to Joshua "be strong and of a good courage, fear not nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God (the same Angel called 'the LORD thy God' in relation to Moses), He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Dt. 31:3,6,7). These words are quoted in Heb. 13:5, and it is good to note the original Angelic context in which the words were used: "Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I (the Angel) will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord (i. e. the Angel) is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels10_3.htm

Ps. 77

Self-talk is perhaps the very essence of prayer; this speaking to ourselves is in fact a speaking to God. That's how we can live the life of continual prayer which busy men like David and Paul claim to have lived. David especially speaks of how he communes with his own heart at night (Ps. 77:6; 119:148 s.w.)- this in particular is the time for self-talk. And hence Prov. 6:22 uses the same word to describe how when we awake, our self-talk will again be of God's word.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-5self_talk.htm

How exactly was Peter motivated to walk on water? We want to know, because it's the motivation that we so urgently need. We read that the Lord "passed by". This is the very language used in the Old Testament concerning theophanies, i.e. those times when God 'passed by' before His people, accompanied by earthquake, rain, wind, fire etc. These ideas all recur here in the account of Jesus 'passing by' before the fearful disciples. In Mt. 14:27 the Lord tells them: "It is I". This was a reference

to the “I am” of the Yahweh Name. Peter knew that it was Yahweh who walks upon the waves of the sea (Job 9:8), and so he asks that if Jesus is really “I am”, God manifest in flesh, then He will bid Peter also walk on the water. It was Yahweh whose way was upon the sea (Ps. 77:19 Heb.; Ps. 29:3). Indeed, the whole incident on the lake is almost prophesied in Ps. 107. The people are hungry in desolate places (:4,5), they are filled by Yahweh with good things, as the Lord Jesus fed the multitude (:9); some go down to the sea in ships (:23); a storm arises, sent from God (:25); they are troubled and cry out (:27,28); and then Yahweh delivers them, bringing them to their desired haven (:28-30). Peter, I think, perceived all this. He saw that this Man from Nazareth was indeed manifesting Yahweh, and he is asking that he too will be a part of God’s manifestation; he perceived that what was true of Jesus really could be true for us. If Jesus, manifesting Yahweh, walked upon the sea, then so could Peter. When Peter asks Jesus to “bid me come unto thee”, the Greek word translated “come” is also translated “to accompany”. He wanted to walk with Jesus on the water. He wanted to do what Jesus was doing. This of itself explains how the fact Jesus did what God did [e.g. walk on waves] doesn’t mean He is “very God of very gods”- for Peter realized that he too could have a part in that manifestation. If Jesus was a man of our nature and yet God manifest, then, Peter reasoned, I too can manifest the Father. And the same is true for us, today. The reality of God’s manifestation in the human Jesus should inspire us too to leave our comfort zones and enter the adventure of living Godly- living like God- in this present world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-7Walking_On_Water.htm

Mk. 9

The Lord Jesus spoke several times of taking up the cross and following Him. This is the life you have committed yourself to by baptism; you have at least tried to take up the cross. The full horror and shock of what He was saying doubtless registered more powerfully with the first century believers than with us. They would have seen men in the agony of approaching death carrying their crosses and then being nailed to them. And the Lord Jesus asked men to do this to themselves. Our takings up of the cross will result in damage- the plucked out eye, the cut off foot. And notice that the Lord says that we will enter lame into the eternal life, or enter the Kingdom with just one eye (Mk. 9:45-47). Surely this means that the effects of our self-sacrifice in this life will in fact be eternally evident in the life which is to come. The idea of taking up the cross suggests a conscious, decided willingness to take on board the life of self-crucifixion. Taking up the cross is therefore not just a passive acceptance of the trials of life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/10Taking_Up_The_Cross.htm

Feb. 14

Ex. 24,25

" I will that they also...be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (Jn. 17:24) alludes to the 70 elders sharing Moses' experience in the Mount (Ex.24:70); it is as if Christ is saying that his disciples really can enter into his relationship with God, we can be where he was spiritually in his mortal life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-6Moses_In_The_Gospel_Of_John.htm

Moses bound the people into covenant relationship with the words: "Behold the blood of the covenant" (Ex. 24:8). These very words were used by the Lord in introducing the emblems of the breaking of bread (Mk. 14:24). This is how important it is. We are showing that we are the covenant, special Israel of God amidst a Gentile world. Indeed, "the blood of the covenant" in later Judaism came to refer to the blood of circumcision (cp. Gen. 17:10) and it could be that the Lord was seeking to draw a comparison between circumcision and the breaking of bread. For this is how His words would have sounded in the ears of His initial hearers. This is how vital and defining it is to partake of it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-5Importance_of_Breaking_of_Bread.html

Ps. 78

Israel turned back in the day of battle, they lost their faith and nerve, because "they kept not the covenant" (Ps. 78:9). Keeping the covenant had an effect upon the crises of life. And keeping it was not a matter of mere outward obedience, it was rather a state of the heart. Thus "their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant" (Ps. 78:37). The covenants /promises made to Abraham and David above all take a grip upon the heart- and we have to keep remembering that those same covenants are made with all who are in Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Israel were humbled by the Angel in their lives: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee. . He . . suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna. . that He might make thee know that. . by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Dt. 8:2,3). It was the Angel that led them, and provided manna (Ps. 78:23-25), and who needed to "know what was in thine heart" (Dt. 8:2)- God Himself knows the heart of men (Ps. 44:21; Jer. 17:10). So recognizing the extent of Angelic work in our lives should in itself be a humbling experience, not least because if we recognize we are led by the Angels through life, we cannot plan ahead in our own strength.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels8_1.htm

Mk. 10

In the preaching of the word of salvation to those who they knew wouldn't respond,

the Father and Son show their hopeful spirit. Having explained “how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom”, the Lord went on to comment: “With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible” (Mk. 10:25,27). It is impossible for a rich man to be saved, He seems to be saying. And as we seek to convert the rich and self-satisfied in the societies in which we live, this does indeed seem the case. But although on one hand it is an impossibility, yet not with God: for He desires to seek and save the rich too. And indeed He does, achieving what with men is impossible. And the Father seeks to impress His positive attitude upon us.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8.htm>

Feb. 15

Ex. 26

There is great emphasis in Ex. 26 that the tabernacle was "one", joined together in such a way that taught the lesson of unity. The spiritual tabernacle, the believers, was "pitched" by the Lord- translating a Greek word which suggests 'crucifixion' (Heb. 8:2). Through the cross, the one, united tabernacle was pitched. To tear down that structure by disuniting the body is to undo the work of the cross.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6-3The_Atonement_And_Fellowship.htm

The layout of the tabernacle was a "pattern of things in the (literal) Heavens" (Heb. 9:23). In the wilderness journey, the ark was covered in the tabernacle by the various layers of the tent detailed in Ex. 26:1-6: sea cows' skins, red rams skins, goats hair, blue, purple, scarlet and linen. These would form a kind of rainbow over the ark, and above that there was the Angel in the pillar of cloud or fire. This "pattern of things in the Heavens" replicated the visions of a throne (the ark) over-arched by a rainbow and the glory of God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels3.htm>

Ps. 79,80

The Hebrew word translated "zeal" in the context of God's zeal for us (Is. 9:7) really means the jealousy which flares up in a man for a woman (the same word is in Num. 5:14,15; Prov. 6:34; Song 8:6 etc.). That jealousy burning like fire (Ps. 79:5) is His passion for us His people. He is a jealous God in His zeal for us; and therefore any other relationships with the things of this world cannot be contemplated by us. That zeal of God will be poured out upon us at the second coming, resulting in a consummation with Him as the wife of His covenant (Is. 42:13,14; 64:1).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Repentance is elicited by an appreciation of God's Name of Yahweh. Joel appealed: "Rend your heart...and turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger and plenteous in mercy" (Joel 2:13)- alluding clearly to the declaration of the Name in Ex. 34. Because of how God is, as revealed in His Name of Yahweh, because mercy and forgiveness are paramount within the texture of His very personality...therefore, repent. Thus Asaph prayed: " Help us...purge away our sins, for thy name's sake" (Ps. 79:9). Reflection on the Name inspired his faith in forgiveness and thus helped his repentance. It did the same for David (Ps. 25:11) and for Jeremiah (Jer. 14:7,21).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Mk. 11

Consider how the Lord taught ambition in prayer- He put before His men the real possibility of moving a mountain into the sea, if that was what was required (Mk. 11:23). This example wasn't off the top of His head; He was consciously alluding to Job 9:5, where Job says that God alone, but not man, can do something like moving a mountain into the sea. And the Lord is saying: 'Yes, God alone can do it; but such is the potential power of prayer, that He will hearken to your requests to do such things- and do them'.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

Feb. 16

Ex. 27

The veil symbolized the flesh of the Lord; and yet in it was woven scarlet, a symbol of His blood and sacrifice (Ex. 27:16), which permeated His mortal life. The lesson is that the cross is a daily way of life. The Lord taught this when He asked us to take up the cross daily: to live each day in the exercise of the same principles which He lived and died by. Let's not see spiritual life as a survival of a few crises, as and when they present themselves. It's a way of life, and the principles which lead us to the little victories (when we scald ourselves with hot water, when we dirty a newly washed shirt...) will give us the greater ones also, when (e.g.) we stand before a tribunal, or face death in whatever form.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-4-2ongoing_crucifixion_and_death.htm

Ps. 81, 82

Israel in the wilderness could have had honey out of the rock to feed them (Ps. 81:16), but because they "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. 78:41), they received only water and manna. So much potential has been prepared for us to experience- yet we realize so little of it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-2limiting_god.htm

God speaks of Israel as if they were His beloved baby child: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But [so tragically] my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me...oh that my people would hearken unto me, that Israel would walk in my ways!" (Ps. 81:10-13 RV). This passage alone makes me want to plead with Israel to return to their so loving Father.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a5.htm>

Mk. 12

"Surely they will reverence my Son" is the thought imputed to Almighty God in the parable, as He sends His only Son to seek for spiritual response in Israel (Mk. 12:6). The parable frames God as almost naive in believing that although Israel had killed the prophets, they would reverence the Word made flesh, and the speaking of God to them in Him. Yet of course God knew what would happen; but in order to express the extraordinary, unenterable extent of His hopefulness, He is framed in this way. God's hopefulness should be ours.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8.htm>

Feb. 17

Ex. 28

Judgment and prayer are linked. The "breastplate of judgment" enabled the High Priest to bear the names of all Israel before the Lord in mediation- and their judgment was carried by him, as it is by Jesus, in the process of mediating for them (Ex. 28:29,30). Romans is full of legal language, of interceding, pleading, finding a favourable verdict etc., and refers this to the judgment and also to the cross.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

Like the Levites, we give our lives back to God, in service towards His children. The Lord died that He might "sanctify" us to God. This is the word used by the LXX to describe the consecration of the priests to service of the body of Israel (Ex. 28:41). If we reject the call to priesthood today, we reject the point of the Lord's saving suffering for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-2-3Priesthood_Today.htm

Psa 83, 84

It is quite possible to translate 2 Pet.3:8 as "One day with the Lord is as a thousand", which would suggest another Psalm allusion- this time to Ps.84:18: "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand". In this case Peter would be saying 'By all means be aware that a day of judgment and condemnation will surely come, as outlined in v.5-7; but beloved, do be mindful too of the wonderful reward. Just 24 (12?) hours of perfect fellowship with the Lord, unmarred by our sinful nature, is worth a thousand years of this life!'. Truly an inspiring thought, and a motivation to come to

appreciate the righteousness of God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/20-2.htm>

Mk. 13

The Lord says that we are all the watchers of the door of the house of the ecclesia (Mk. 13:34,35; Lk. 12:39,40), as the prophets were the watchmen over the city of Zion, God's Old Testament ecclesia. We *all* therefore have a responsibility to guide and warn the ecclesia, not just to scrape out of condemnation for ourselves, but from a genuine, earnest desire to help others to the Kingdom road. It's not something we can just leave to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

Feb. 18

Ex. 29

Although we are a great multitude of redeemed, yet the communication of the Father and Son to us are still amazingly unique, even though we all hear and read the same actual words, and reflect upon the same facts. Right back at the beginning of God's relationship with Israel He had made the point that "I will meet you [plural] to speak there unto thee [you singular]" (Ex. 29:42).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-1Personal_Relationship_With_Jesus.htm

Christ's interpretation of the manna as representing the word in John 6 would support this idea of the Angels spiritually strengthening Israel on their journey. Ex. 29:42 implies this happened daily; the Angel stood at the door of the tabernacle each day to speak with them. Perhaps the same is true today for those who through Angelic help feed daily on the manna of the Word. In our wilderness journey this day, the Angel is providing strength to endure.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels12_3.htm

Psa 85, 86

It seems that in the Lord Jesus alone we see the perfect fusion of " grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14); in Him alone mercy and truth met together, in His personality alone righteousness and peace kissed each other (in the words of the beautiful Messianic prophecy of Ps. 85:10). Somehow it seems that we both individually and collectively cannot achieve this. We are either too soft and compromise and lose the Faith, or we are too hard and lose the spirit of Christ our Lord, without which we are " none of his" (Rom. 8:9). The result of this is that whenever the Truth is revived, that community is in a sense born to roll downhill; after two or three generations the Truth is lost. Either they destroy themselves through bitter subdivision, or they compromise with error and lose the Faith. Perhaps it is God's plan that no one community should hold the Faith through many generations;

perhaps this is one explanation of the paradox within Bible teaching about fellowship. But perhaps the 'contradiction' is there to teach us - or try to teach us - the need for us to rise up to the challenge of showing " grace and truth" in our thinking and judging, even though we cannot fully achieve it; to realize our tragic inability in this, to recognize that within our limited nature this must be an unsolvable paradox. And thereby we should be led to appreciate more the beauty and the wonder of the way in which these two concepts are linked together in the Father and His Son, and to yearn more to perceive and enter into the glory of God's Name, which totally incorporates these two humanly opposed aspects (Ex. 34:6,7; Rom. 11:22).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3Bible_Paradoxes.htm

Mk. 14

Mark's record of the Lord's trial is not merely a historical account. It's framed in terms of our need to testify for our faith too. The Lord's example in His time of suffering was and is intended to be our example and inspiration, in that we are to in a very practical sense enter into His sufferings. Mark records the Lord's prediction that His people would have to witness before both Jewish and Gentile authorities (Mk. 13:9-13)- and then Mark goes on in the next chapter to describe Jesus doing just this. The Lord asked His suffering followers not to prepare speeches of self-defence- perhaps exemplified and patterned for us in the way that He remained silent before His accusers. Peter is recorded as denying Christ three times- just as the Romans interrogated Christians and asked them to three times deny Christ (2). The Christians were also asked to curse, or anathematizein, Jesus (3). And when we read of Peter's cursing, the same word is used. We're left with the impression that Peter actually cursed Christ. And so Mark, who was likely writing the Gospel on Peter's behalf, is showing that Peter, the leader of the church, actually pathetically failed to follow his Lord at this time. And yet the Gospel of Mark was being distributed to Christians who were being dragged before Jewish and Roman courts. The idea was surely to give them an example and encouragement from Peter's failure, rather than portray a positive example of a man overcoming the temptation to curse and deny Christ. But this was how the Lord used Peter- as an example from failure for all of us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-1-3Peters_Conversion.htm

Feb. 19

Ex. 30

Thanks to David building an altar at his own expense and asking God to kill him and his family, God stopped the plague upon Israel (2 Sam. 24:16,17- the stretched out hand of God in destruction was what David asked to be upon him and his family). Israel were suffering the effect of their own sin, in not paying the temple tax (Ex. 30:11-16); but in the spirit of Christ, David was willing to die for them. He seems to have sincerely felt that their sin was his sin (25:17). And his dominant

desire was counted as if it had been done, and thanks to his self-sacrificial spirit, the people were saved when they personally were unworthy.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-10The_Love_Of_Christ.html

There are many allusions to the language of priesthood in the New Testament, both as major statements and also in passing (e.g. the description of us as "blameless", Tit. 1:7, is priestly language). This usage illustrates for us the meaning of priesthood. "He that is washed needeth not save but to wash his feet" (Jn. 13:10) was surely suggesting that all baptized believers ("washed") were like the priests, who firstly washed their bodies and then their hands and feet, before entering on service (Ex. 30:21). We're called to be priests this day- not passengers, spectators at a show. But actually feeling the call to be dedicated to ministry to others as a way of life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-2-2The_Meaning_Of_Priesthood.htm

Psa 87, 88

Is. 40:26 compares God's 'bringing out' of Judah from Babylon with His 'bringing out' the stars by their individual names, all wonderfully known to Him. Ps. 87:6 had prophesied something similar about the restoration of Zion's fortunes: "The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there". The Kingdom of God was to be the restoration of Israel's Kingdom- but they had to actually get on and restore it rather than wait for it to come. The Kingdom might have come then, if they'd fulfilled the conditions. And with us, so much has been made possible for us, this day and every day- yet will we achieve that potential? Will the return of Christ be as it were delayed because of this?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-7-2Zerubbabel_Potential_Messiah.htm

Mk. 15, 16

Perhaps when He crossed Kidron He would have thought back to how Asa had to separate himself from his mother in the very same place (1 Kings 15:13). The crucifixion record describes Mary the mother of Jesus as Mary the mother of James and Joses (Mk. 15:40 cp. Mt. 13:55)- not Mary the mother of Jesus. It's as if the record itself seeks to show that separation between mother and Son which occurred there. Both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James- i.e. the mother of Jesus too (Mk. 16:1 = Mk. 15:40 = Mt. 13:55) came to the sepulchre, but Jesus chose to appear to Mary Magdalene first (Mk. 15:9), and not His own dear mother. Mt. 27:61 almost cruelly rubs the point in: "There was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre", but the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene first. Indeed, there is no record that He ever appeared to His mother. This would presumably have been to help her in realizing that she must relate to Him as her Lord and Saviour now, like any other woman had to, and not as a woman with special maternal privileges in her relationship with her now Almighty Son. It must have so pained the Lord to do this- to not appear to his dear mother first. But as He oftentimes acts with us, so He did with her- doing something which

even in Divine nature must have been so painful for Him, in order to help her in her growth.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-4-1Mary_At_The_Cross.htm

Feb. 20

Ex. 31, 32

It is simply fantastic that Moses could love those people so intensely, despite their aggression and indifference towards him. He was prepared to give his place in the Kingdom so that they might enter; he prayed God to accept his offer. He knew that atonement could only be by sacrifice of blood (Lev. 17:11); and yet he climbed the Mount with the intent of making atonement himself for Israel's sin (Ex. 32:30); he intended to give his life for them. And he didn't make such a promise in hot blood, as some men might. He made the statement, and then made the long climb to the top of the mount. And during that climb, it seems he came to an even higher spiritual level; he was prepared not only to offer his physical life, but also his place in the Kingdom (Ex. 32:32 cp. Ez. 13:9; Dan. 12:2; Lk. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 20:12). Now although hopefully we are not rejecting Christ as they did, the fact still stands that the love of Moses for Israel typifies the love of Christ towards us. The degree, the extent of Moses' love, is but a dim foretaste of the degree of the love of Christ for us. Now in this is something wonderful, something we really need to go away and meditate about. And the wonder of it all is that Israel did not realize the extent of Moses' love at the time. At the end of his life he recounts how God has threatened to destroy the people, and then "I turned and came down from the mount" (Dt. 9:15). He doesn't record his 40 days of pleading with the Father, and how he turned down the offer of having himself made into a great nation. In this we see tremendous spiritual culture, pointing forward to the Lord's own self-perception of His sacrifice.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-4Moses_As_A_Type_Of_Christ.htm

Psa 89

There are a number of links between the Psalms and Job's speeches (run your eye down the marginal references). Depressed Job must have been very much at the back of David's mind. Like Job, David knew and respected God's promises, but at times such as that when he wrote Ps.89, it all seemed rather abstract, and in his depression he bitterly questioned God. In Ps.89, David repeats the promises made to him, but compares them with his present difficult situation: "Thou saidst...my covenant will I not break...but thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant" (Ps.89:19,34,39). He reflected how God had promised that "The enemy shall not exact upon him", but now his enemies clearly had the upper hand (Ps.89:22 cp. "Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice", v.42,50,51). Likewise "His throne (shall endure) as the sun", but "thou hast profaned his crown (i.e. his throne) by casting it to the ground" (Ps.89:36,39). It is in the context of God promising David eternity that he questions: "Shall he (God) deliver his soul from the grave? What

man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" (Ps.89:48). He goes so far as to feel that God's " former lovingkindnesses (a word often re. the promises), which thou swarest unto David in thy truth" had been at best suspended (Ps.89:49). Surely David is close to the edge here; there almost seems to be a sense of mocking in his comments on the promise that his throne would endure for ever as the sun: " His throne (shall endure) as the sun...but...Thou hast cast his throne down to the ground" , rather than it being like the sun (Ps.89:36,44). Yet truly in the spirit of Job, he was able to praise God in this very same context: " Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and amen" (Ps.89:52). Presumably this Psalm was written (or thought out) whilst fleeing from Absalom, or possibly during one of the later rebellions, when it seemed that all hope of holding on to the throne was lost. Here is David in depression, making hasty comments about the faithfulness of God, reacting to the position of the moment. This is surely an indication of his mental make up. One cannot be persuaded that the Lord Jesus did not experience the temptations which go along with this kind of personality. " My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt.27:46) and the following thoughts in Ps.22 seem to be Christ's equivalent of David's crisis in Ps.89. Yet- and this is *so* wonderful- God worked through David's depressive mood at this time to inspire the most wonderful prophecies of His Son. Indeed, it would seem that David himself nursed himself through his own depression towards an understanding of Christ equalled by no other Old Testament figure. Depression leads to self-knowledge in the end, and that heightened introspection, with God's guidance, leads us in some way to Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-5Character_Of_David.htm

1Co 1, 2

The voice of the Lord's blood shakes all things, the only thing unshaken by it is the Hope of the Kingdom (Heb. 12:25-29). It shows forth, as a voice, God's righteousness (Rom. 3:25,26 RV). When 1 Cor. 1:18 speaks of "the preaching (Gk. 'the word') of the cross", we have the same idea; the word of the cross, the word which is the cross, preaches to us of itself, as we behold it. Paul declared unto Corinth "the testimony of God", i.e. "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1,2). This message was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power", "the wisdom of God", "Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:17,23,24; 2:4,5). Indeed, "the cross of Christ" is put for 'the preaching of His cross' (1:17). All these things are parallel. The cross is in itself the testimony and witness of God. This is why, Paul reasons, the power of the cross itself means that it doesn't matter how poorly that message is presented in human words; indeed, such is its excellence and power that we even shouldn't seek to present it with a layer of human 'culture' and verbiage shrouding it. So today, let's reflect upon the cross and be shaken by it, and hear the word of God to us through it.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Feb. 21

Ex. 33, 34

These chapters are the basis for many New Testament allusions. For example: " The word was made flesh...we beheld his (Christ's) glory...full of grace and truth" (1:14). " if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see (like Moses) the glory of God" (John 11:40). Philip asks Jesus to "show us the Father" (John 14:8), and Jesus replies that He is the manifestation of the Father.

Israel had asked that " the word" be not spoken to them any more; only Moses saw God's glory. But we are being invited to be equal to Moses, seeing from the cleft in the rock the awesome majesty of the perfection of Christ's character; the full glory of God. But do we appreciate his righteousness? Paul likewise invites us to behold with unveiled face, as Moses did (2 Cor. 3:18 RV), and thereby, just from appreciating the glory of Christ's character, be changed into the same glory. Note too how in Rom. 11 we are each bidden "behold the goodness and severity of God"- a reference to Moses beholding all the goodness of Yahweh. We are in essence in his position right now (Ex. 33:19).

This is the language of Ex. 33:18 LXX, where Moses likewise asks God "show yourself to me". The answer was in the theophany on Sinai, with the Name of Yahweh declared, as full of grace and truth. This, according to Philip's allusion to it, is what we see in Jesus. And this is why Jn. 1 speaks of Jesus in terms of the theophany of Exodus, that in His personality the full glory of the Father dwelt.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-6Moses_In_The_Gospel_Of_John.htm

Psa 90, 91

Ps. 90:13 "Let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. . . Return, O Lord. . . O satisfy us early with Thy mercy. . . for we are consumed by Thine anger". This 'prayer of Moses' (title) is lamenting how Israel were being destroyed by the Angel as they wandered in the forty year period of punishment. It may even be that the Angel left Israel in a sense (hence "Return O Lord") although still leading them. Thus there are different degrees of the Angelic presence- as at the restoration the Angel did in a limited sense return to the temple. Yet Moses clearly believed that this period of decreed punishment could be shortened ("satisfy us early with Thy mercy") by the Angel repenting. Previously his prayers had succeeded in making the Angel repent of the evil that He had planned to do to Israel, and Moses evidently hoped the Angel would again repent. Why exactly didn't He? In our reasoning with God and Angels in prayer- are we this bold? Is there any reason why we should *not* be?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels7_3.htm

1Co 3

Paul seems to have assumed that all of us would preach and make converts (not leave it to just some of our community): he speaks of how " every man" in the ecclesia builds upon the foundation of Christ, but how he builds will be judged by fire. If what he has built is burnt up at the judgment, he himself will be saved, but not what he has built (1 Cor. 3:10-15). I would suggest that the 'building' refers to

our converts and work with other believers. If they fail of the Kingdom, we ourselves will be saved, but our work will have been in vain. This parable also suggests that the salvation of others, their passing through the fire at the judgment, is dependent upon how we build. This may be hyperbole to make a point, but it is a powerful encouragement that we are all elders and preachers, and we all have a deep effect on others' spirituality. We have responsibilities to those who respond to our preaching. The preaching of the Kingdom of God is not only in words but by the power of example (1 Cor. 4:20).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

Feb. 22

Ex. 35

The generous response of the Israelites in giving towards the tabernacle was surely because it was not demanded of them but merely their assistance was invited (Ex. 35:24). The grace of God, His demand as it were for so little from us, should motivate us to give our all.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-4Jephthah%27s_Vow_Principle.htm

Paul pleads with Corinth to see the similarities between them and the ecclesia in the wilderness; he wants them to personalize it all. He sees their gathering and redistribution of wealth as exactly analogous to Israel's gathering of manna (2 Cor. 8:15)- and he so wishes his Corinthians to think themselves into Israel's shoes. For then they would realize that as Israel had to have a willing heart to give back to God the wealth of Egypt which He had given them, so they were to have a willing heart in being generous to their poorer brethren (Ex. 35:5 = 2 Cor. 8:12). And they would have realized that as "last year" they had made this offer (2 Cor. 8:10 Gk.), so the year before, Israel had received Egypt's wealth with a similar undertaking to use it for the Lord's cause. As Moses had to remind them a second time of their obligations in Ex. 35, so Paul had to bring it again before Corinth. And if they had seen these similarities, they would have got the sense of Paul's lament that there was not one wise hearted man amongst them- for the "wise hearted" were to convert Israel's gold and silver into tools for Yahweh's service (Ex. 35:10 = 1 Cor. 6:5; 2 Cor. 10:12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-7how_to_study_the__bible.htm

Psa 92, 93

Ps. 92 is a psalm of joy for the Sabbath (note that the titles of the Psalms are inspired- at least two of them are cited as inspired scripture in the NT). The Sabbath was ordained in order that man might think back on the reality of creation; and this most essential core reality should be an endless source of joy for us, if we believe it: " For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thine hands" (Ps. 92:4), just as the Angels shouted for joy at creation. David's

motivation for praise was simply because God has created him: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). Even in the cycle of death, which is part of the ongoing creation and renewal of the planet, there is something to praise. Thus David praised God because of the way that He takes away the breath of animals and they die, and then renews His creation; as "the Lord rejoices in his works" of creation, so David joins Him in a sublime fellowship of Creator and creature (Ps. 104:29-31) which flowed out of a basic belief in God as creator.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3God_As_Creator.htm

1Co 4, 5

The fact that Paul saw the spiritual man in all his brethren means that to some degree he saw them all as equal. He seems to bring this point out in 1 Cor. 4:14,17: "As my beloved sons I warn you (Corinth ecclesia)...for this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son..." . Paul calls both Corinth and Timothy his beloved sons. The implication is that to some degree, he felt the same towards dodgy Corinth as he did towards the spiritually strong Timothy. Likewise Christ showed his love for the whole church when he died on the cross. This does not mean, of course, that Paul did not have deeper bonds with some than with others. But the fact is that in spiritual terms, he saw all his brethren as equal, in that they shared the same status of being justified in Christ. Whether one had 2% righteousness and another 5% was irrelevant; they both needed the massive imputation of God's righteousness through Christ. As Paul could call both Timothy and Corinth his "beloved sons" , so God calls both Christ and ourselves by the same title (Mt.3:17 cp. Col.3:12; 1 Jn.3:2; 2 Thess.2:13) . The reason? Because "he hath made us accepted (by being) in the beloved (son)" (Eph.1:6).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-9Paul_And_Corinth.htm

Feb. 23

Ex. 36

Note all the times we read in this chapter of how the various parts of the tabernacle, the curtains, the couplings etc., all joined together to make "one tabernacle". There is one body- this is a very common theme in the New Testament. But it has strong Old Testament antecedents. There was one chosen nation, one land, one tabernacle, one altar, one covenant, one temple- unity was God's evident intention for His people even in Old Testament times.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

Psa 94, 95

Ps. 94:8,9 tells the fools to be wise and watch their behaviour, because "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" . Reflection on the fact that God truly is our personal designer and creator will lead to

an awareness that He therefore sees and knows all things. These first principles powerfully link up, to exhort us to live life and speak our words knowing we are in the very presence of our creator. And remember that it was reflection upon the extent and nature of God's creative power which lead to Job's repentance; it isn't something we can passively reflect upon.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3God_As_Creator.htm

1Co 6

Because He rose, therefore we stop committing sin (1 Cor. 6:14). We can't wilfully sin if we believe in the forgiveness His resurrection has enabled. Men should repent not only because judgment day is coming, but because God has commended repentance to us, He has offered / inspired faith in His forgiveness by the resurrection of Christ (Acts 17:30,31 AV mg.). The empty tomb and all the Lord's glorification means for us should therefore inspire personal repentance; as well as of itself being an imperative to go and share this good news with a sinful world, appealing for them to repent and be baptized so that they too might share in the forgiveness enabled for them by the resurrection.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/2.htm>

Feb. 24

Ex. 37

The cherubim were figures of beaten gold at either end of the mercy seat (Ex. 37: 7-9). Their wings overshadowed the mercy seat with which they were of one piece (Ex. 25:19-20). The connection between Angels and cherubim means that they were gazing down into the blood of the sacrifices. 1 Pet. 1:10 and 12 alludes to this: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently. . . which things the Angels (also) desire to look into", referring to the Cherubim Angels peering down intently into the blood on the mercy seat, the "salvation" which the prophets searched after. We are to be made like Angels (Lk. 20:35,36), and yet this would imply that Angels are of limited knowledge. Thus having Divine nature doesn't mean we will know everything. We'll spend eternity growing, dynamically!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels1.htm>

Psa 96-99

Note the parallels between Psalms 96 and 98:

Psalm 96

O sing unto the Lord a new
song (:1)

Psalm 98

O sing unto the Lord a new
song (:1)

His wonders among all people. For He hath done marvellous [s.w. 'wonders'] things in the sight of the nations (:2 RV)	declare His glory among the nations (:3)
righteousness and truth (:13)	righteousness and truth (:3)
Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof (:11)	Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof (:7)
for He cometh to judge the earth (:9)	for He cometh to judge the earth (:13)
The Lord reigneth (v.10)	The Lord the king (:6)

But there are some subtle differences. Ps. 96:2,3 exhorts us: "Show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen". But Ps. 98:2 puts it another way: "The Lord hath made known His salvation. His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the nations". These latter words are only true in that *we* make known that salvation, and *we* declare His glory among the nations. Thus a statement in Ps. 98 that Yahweh has shewed His glory to the nations becomes an imperative for us to go and do that in Ps. 96. When we read statements about what God is like, we are therefore to actively go out and live accordingly to enable these things to really be so. Likewise, if our Lord is the light of the world- we are to be likewise!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-5fulfilling_the_sufferings_of_jesus.htm

1Co 7

The power of Paul's teaching about singleness is backed up by his personal situation. As a member of the Council who condemned Stephen, he would have had to be married. An unmarried Orthodox Jew would have been a contradiction in terms at that time. And yet he is evidently single in his Christian ministry. It seems fairly certain that his wife either died or left him at the time of his conversion, probably taking the children with her. If this is so, it gives extra poignancy to his comment that he had suffered the loss of all things for the sake of his conversion (Phil. 3:8). The chances are that he thought and wrote that with a difficult glance back to that Jerusalem girl, the toddlers he'd never seen again, the life and infinite possibilities of what might have been... And it gives another angle on his description of his converts as his children.

There is evidence that " the single life was highly honoured and respected in the early church, sometimes even going beyond the teaching of Paul". Yet for us, marriage is given more respect than singleness. The single believer is seen as somehow incomplete; there is a sense that the married home owner in a stable job is somehow spiritually strong too. Of course, there are many unstable single believers;

but let's not judge the status of singleness by them. The Lord and Paul are asking a very high level of commitment from us. It's so high that it seems strange to us. The reason, I suggest, is that 21st Century Christianity and first century Christianity are very different- in terms of commitment, not doctrine.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-10-5_1_Corinthians_7_Exposition.htm

Feb. 25

Ex. 38

Ex.38:18 describes the curtain over the door of the tabernacle in similar language to how the veil hiding the Most Holy is described. Christ is the door of the tabernacle through which we enter at our conversion (Jn.10:9). By doing so we also enter, in prospect, through the veil into the Most Holy of eternity and Divine nature. We really are, right now today, saved in prospect!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/james_d04.html

Psa 100, 101

The fact that God Himself created us, as His sheep, "and not we ourselves" (a comment applicable, in essence, to theories of evolution and genetic engineering)... should lead us to ecstatic singing of praise before Him (Ps. 100:3). Likewise Ps. 96:2,5, and so many other examples, invite us to enthusiastically praise God, simply because "the Lord made the heavens". God as creator results in joy and praise amongst those of His creation who recognize Him as creator.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3God_As_Creator.htm

1Co 8, 9

Paul evidently did not turn a blind eye to his brethren's failures. He spoke of them in one breath as being spiritually complete, whilst in the next he showed that he was truly aware of their failures. There's a glaring example of this in 1 Cor. 5:6,7: " A little leaven (which they had in their bad attitude, and also in the presence of the incestuous brother) leaveneth the whole lump. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened" . They had leaven; otherwise Paul would not have told them to purge it out. But then he tells them that they are " unleavened" . In other words, he saw them as if they were unleavened, but he recognized that they had the bad leaven among and within them. There's another blatant example of this in 1 Cor.8:1,4,7: " As touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge...(v.4) we know that an idol is nothing in the world...(v.7) howbeit there is not in every man (in the ecclesia) that knowledge" . So Paul starts off by saying that they all knew about the correct attitude to meat offered to idols. But then he recognizes that in reality, not all of them did know, or at best, they did not appreciate what they knew. This is a great encouragement for us to have a positive view of our weak brethren, by reason of their status "in

Christ".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-9Paul_And_Corinth.htm

Feb. 26

Ex. 39, 40

The Lord having His own clothes put back on Him meant that He would have been dressed in blood sprinkled garments for the walk to Golgotha. Again His holy mind would have been on the Messianic prophecies of Is. 63 about a Messiah with blood sprinkled garments lifted up in glorious victory. Or perhaps He saw the connection to Lev. 8:30, where the priests had to have blood sprinkled garments in order to begin their priestly work. This would have sent His mind to us, for whom He was interceding. Likewise when He perceived that His garment would not be rent, He would have joyfully perceived that He was indeed as the High Priest whose garment was not to be rent (Ex. 39:23). In the trials and tests of today, are we looking out for the way that encouragement for the spiritual mind is hidden within them?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-5Walk_To_Golgotha.htm

The question arises as to why Mary anointed the Lord's feet, when anointing is nearly always of the head. The only time the foot of anything was anointed was in Ex. 40:11, when the pedestal / "foot" of the laver was anointed in order to consecrate it. This pedestal was made from the brass mirrors donated by repentant prostitutes (Ex. 38:8 = 1 Sam. 2:22). In this there is the connection. Mary the repentant whore wanted to likewise donate way she had to the true tabernacle and laver, which she perceived to be the Lord Jesus. Her equivalent of brass mirrors was her pound of spikenard. And it could be that she had been baptized at her conversion, and saw the Lord as her laver. And this was her response- to pour all her wealth into Him. She anointed him for His death- for she perceived that it was through death that the Lord would fulfill all the OT types of the laver etc. And what is *our* level of spiritual perception? If she could be like that- how about us, who are literate and have easy access to God's written word?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/18-4Jesus_Mary_Magdalene_Relationship.htm

Psa 102

Those who are thankfully redeemed in Christ, now lovingly reconciled to Him, are described as blind, starving prisoners, bound in the darkness, awaiting execution (Ps. 107:14; Is. 42:7; 49:9; 61:1; Zech. 9:11). Our prayers should be like those of a man on death row in a dark dungeon, waiting to die, but groaning for salvation (Ps. 102:17,20). This is the extent of our desperation. We are "the poor" (Gk. 'the crouchers'), cringing in utter spiritual destitution (Mt. 5:3). And yet we have a terrible tendency to only occasionally really pray, content with prayer on a surface level- because we don't realize our desperation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-5Our_Desperation.htm

1Co 10

Paul speaks of us each one partaking of “the table of the Lord” (1 Cor. 10:21), a phrase used in the LXX for the altar (Ez. 44:16; Mal. 1:7,12)- the sacrifices whereof only the priests could eat. This would have been radical thinking to a community used to priests and men delegated to take charge of others’ religious affairs. Hebrew 3:13 gets at this idea when we read that we are to exhort one another not to turn away, situated as we are on the brink of the promised land, just as Moses exhorted Israel. It was accepted in Judaism, as well as in many other contemporary religions, that faithful saints [e.g. the patriarchs, Moses, the prophets etc, in Judaism’s case] could intercede for the people. Yet in the New Testament, all believers are urged to intercede for each other, even to the point of seeking to gain forgiveness for others’ sins (1 Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18; James 5:15). They were all to do this vital work. The radical nature of this can easily be overlooked by us, reading from this distance.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

Feb. 27

Lev. 1, 2

All the references to “the Lord spake unto Moses” (Lev. 1:1) could indicate Moses’ humility- Moses submerged his own personality in writing his books. Or, they could indicate the hand of an inspired editor.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-4Moses_As_A_Type_Of_Christ.htm

The awareness of sin in the peace offering is brought out by a highly unusual feature. The offering was to be made with “leavened bread” (Lev. 7:13), even though it was normally forbidden to offer any sacrifice made with leaven (Lev. 2:11). The unusualness of this feature was in order to drive a point home. Whilst we are not to offer our bodies to God with the leaven of sinfulness (cp. 1 Cor. 5), we are to have an awareness of the presence of sin as we keep our peace offering. Awareness of our own failure is vital for peaceful fellowship with God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-2breaking_of_bread_peace_offering.htm

Psa 103

Ps. 103:18 parallels “such as keep his covenant” with “those that remember his commandments to do them”. Covenant relationship brings a natural desire to live within the atmosphere of God’s spirituality. For Israel in covenant with God, absolutely nothing- not sex, menstruation, the content of clothing fabric, diet- could fall outside the scope of their covenant relationship. And so in principle it is with us under the new covenant. Such a relationship also precludes the worship of any other God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp8.htm>

1Co 11

1 Cor. 11:29 invites us to discern the Lord's body at the memorial meeting. A related Greek word occurs in v.28: "let a man examine himself". It's too bad that the translations mask this connection. We are to examine / discern the Lord's body, and to do the same to ourselves (1). The two are inextricably related. Meditation upon and analysis of His body will lead to self examination and discernment. In this lies the answer to the frequent question: 'What should we examine at the breaking of bread? Our own sins, or the facts of the crucifixion / resurrection?'. If we think about the latter, we will inevitably be led to think of the former.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Feb. 28

Lev. 3, 4

The record of the sin offering in Lev. 4:10,26,31,35 stresses an impressive four times that the animal was to be prepared and offered (e.g.) " as the fat is taken away from the peace offering" . This serves to emphasize the link between the two sacrifices; the peace offering was in gratitude and rejoicing for the peace of sins forgiven. For this reason it was totally voluntary. Our ecclesial lives inevitably feature a regular time for the memorial meeting. But we should come here each time from a spontaneous joy at the peace we have with God through the blood of Christ. If the breaking of bread, our peace offering, is something done voluntarily, in thanks for the peace we have with God, perhaps it ought to be something we do at times during the week, purely from our own joy at being at peace with God. But how many of us have ever done this? It's something to think about.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-2breaking_of_bread_peace_offering.htm

Name. The Scribe well understood all this: " There is one God...and to love him...and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mk. 12:32,33). Those whole offerings represented the whole body of Israel (Lev. 4:7-15). The Scribe understood that those offerings taught that all Israel were unified together on account of their bearing the same Name of Yahweh. We must love others who bear that Name " as ourselves" , so intense is the unity between us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-6-2unity_of_god.htm

Psa 104

The idea of every little thing in life and the world being controlled by Angels contradicts the notion that God has set this world in motion according to certain natural laws, and that things continue without His direct intervention- as if the

whole system is run by clockwork which God initially wound up. Intervention in this system by God has been called 'the hand of providence'. However, these ideas surely contradict the clear Biblical teaching that every movement in the natural creation is consciously controlled by God through His Angels, thus needing an energetic input from Him through His Spirit for every action to occur. Ps. 104 is full of such examples: " He watereth the hills. . causeth the grass to grow. . maketh darkness (consciously, each night). . . the young lions. . . seek their meat from God. . . sendest forth Thy Spirit (Angel), they are created" (not just by the reproductive system).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/7.htm>

1Cor. 12, 13

The term " Christ" is even used of the believers, such is His unity with us (1 Cor. 12:12). Christ is not divided, and therefore, Paul reasons, divisions amongst brethren are a nonsense. Christ is not divided, and therefore neither should we be (1 Cor. 1:13; 3:3). Consider carefully how that whoever is properly baptized is a member of the one body, and is bound together with all other members of that body: "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body...for the body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor. 12:12-14). Paul, in his relentless manner, drives the point home time and again. He goes on to reason that just because the hand says it isn't of the body, and won't co-operate with the feet, this doesn't mean that it therefore isn't of the body. And so it is with those who say they have broken away from others in the one body; because they say they are not of the body doesn't mean they are not of the body.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

March 1 Lev. 5, 6

Only by a personal reconstruction and reliving of the cross, and a serious, sustained attempt to live out something of its spirit in our lives, will we come to a recognition of the depth of our own failure, our need for His grace, and an appreciation of what really was done for us. And if we realize all this, we will respond- mightily. As the forgiveness suggested by the sin offering led on to the burnt offering (with its message of dedication), so our desperation leads to our dedication (Lev. 5:7). I don't need to list the ways of dedication; for you know, deep within you, how you ought to live: the readings you should read, the money you should quietly give, the phone call you should make, the recurrent wandering thought you should crush... The things you should purge out, the witness you should make, the habits you should form, the rejections and the acceptances you should make. We are taught by the realization of our desperation to go forward, quite naturally, and do all these things.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-5Our_Desperation.htm

Ps. 105

The parable of the ten virgins shows how the Lord recognized that all His people, wise and foolish, would all start off with oil in their lamps at baptism, but would inevitably lose it over time. This reflects the pattern of Israel after the flesh, who began their wilderness journey with none of them weak or ill- which in a group of three million was a miracle (Ps. 105:37). The parable teaches that the Lord's true people would realize their capacity for losing oil, and make some effort to refill themselves. Are we refilling today? Are we holding fast the confidence and joy with which we started the race?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

1Cor. 14

The fullness of Christ's personal character, person, spirit, truth... is to be found in His body on earth, i.e. the community of believers. Each of them manifest a different aspect of Him. Thus "you may all [not just the elders] be prophets in turn [i.e. not just one 'pastor' doing all the teaching] so that all may get knowledge and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:31 BBE). This is the Biblical "unity of the spirit"- whereby the body of Jesus reveals Him consistently, as a unity, thus binding together all who share that same one spirit of Christ. This is the way to unity- not enforcing intellectual assent to dogmatic propositions. And it is the way to knowing Christ- receiving something of Him from *all* those who are in Him, and not just a few members of His body.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

March 2 Lev. 7

The peace offering was one of the many antecedents of the memorial meeting. Once the offerer had dedicated himself to making it, he was condemned if he didn't then do it, and yet also condemned if he ate it unclean (Lev. 7:18,20). So a man had to either cleanse himself, or be condemned. There was no get out, no third road. The man who ate the holy things in a state of uncleanness had to die; his eating would load him with the condemnation of his sins (Lev. 22:3,16 AV mg.). This is surely the source for our possibility of "eating...condemnation" to ourselves by partaking of the breaking of bread in an unworthy manner. And so it is with us as we face the emblems. We must do it, or we deny our covenant relationship. And yet if we do it in our uncleanness, we also deny that relationship. And thus the breaking of bread brings us up before the cross and throne of the Lord Jesus- even now. It brings us to a realistic self-examination. If we cannot examine ourselves and know that Christ is really in us, then we are reprobate; we "have failed" (2 Cor. 13:5 G.N.B.). Self-examination is therefore one of those barriers across our path in life which makes us turn to the Kingdom or to the flesh. If we can't examine ourselves and see that Christ is in us and that we have therefore that great salvation in Him; we've failed. I wouldn't be so bold as to throw down this challenge to any of us in exhortation. But Paul does. It's a powerful, even terrible, logic.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-6trial_of_jealousy.htm

Ps. 106

There is good reason to think that Rom. 1 is a description of Israel in the wilderness. Rom. 1:23 accuses them of changing " the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to...fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" , clearly alluding to Ps. 106:29 concerning how Israel in the wilderness " changed their glory (i.e. God) into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" by making the golden calf. The effective atheism of Rom. 1 is matched by Ps. 106:21: " They forgot God their saviour" . The long catalogue of Israel's wilderness sins in Ps. 106 is similar to that in Rom. 1. " Full of envy" (Rom. 1:29) corresponds to them envying Moses (Ps. 106:16), " whisperers" (Rom. 1:29) to " murmurers" (Ps. 106:25), " inventors of evil things" (Rom. 1:30) to God being angered with " their inventions" of false gods (Ps. 106:29). Because of this " God gave them up" to continue in their sexual perversion and bitterness with each other, even to the extent of murder (Rom. 1:27,29). They were a rabble of about 2 million people living in moral anarchy, driven on in their lust by the knowledge that God had rejected them. Those young people had to violently rebel against the attitude of the world and older generation around them. The waters of the Red Sea truly made them new creatures. They were so evidently not the product of their environment and parental example. Psychologists mock young Christians of today for living out parental expectation, and conforming to background environment. Yet if our response to baptism has made us truly new creations, this just cannot be true.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-7Biblical_Examples_For_Young_People.htm

1Cor. 15

Christ's personal presence, His life and Spirit, are breathed into us through His words being in us. In the mundane monotony of daily life, doing essentially the same job, travelling to work the same route, the alarm clock going off the same time each morning... there can be breathed into us a unique new life through having His words ever abiding within us. And this 'quickenings' in daily life now is the foretaste of the 'quickenings' which we will literally experience at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:22- 'made alive' is the same Greek word translated 'quicken' in Jn. 5:21; 6:63).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

March 3 Lev. 8

As the blood of the ram had to be put on the ear, thumb and toe (Lev. 8:23), so the blood of Christ's atonement should affect every aspect of our lives; our hearing [i.e. our perception], our doing and walking...

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/4-5.htm>

Ps. 107

Mary had quoted Ps. 107:9 about how she had been filled with good things; but Zacharias quoted the next verse, Ps. 107:10, shortly afterwards (Lk. 1:79). Surely Mary had gotten him thinking in the same paths as she did. And she should likewise influence us. Indeed, all Bible characters should be influencing us each day, as part of the great crowd of witnesses who are cheering us on in our race today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-4-2Influence_Of_Mary.htm

1Cor. 16

‘Offices’ in the ecclesia are roles filled by those spiritually qualified to fill them, i.e. filled with the appropriate aspect of the spirit of Christ in order to do the job; being voted into them, educated for them or seconded to them by some committee isn’t a relevant qualification. Paul reminded the Corinthians that submission should be shown to elders who have addicted themselves to serving others (1 Cor. 16:15,16)- i.e. submission arises out of our perception of an elders’ spirituality, not from his mere holding of an office. Sadly, Corinth didn’t stay with this advice. At the end of the first century, the first letter of Clement to Corinth ordered them to accept bishops as having a perpetual right to their office, and that the church must respect that right. And not so long after that, Cyprian was telling them that “whoever has the office receives the spiritual grace requisite for its fulfilment”- the very opposite of the idea of being spiritually qualified for a job in church! ‘We give you the job, and God will give you the spiritual qualifications for it’. That was how quickly the live, dynamic early church became institutionalized; that’s how strong is our desire for structure and offices, rather than the more risky way of allowing the spirit of Christ free course. The Biblical evidence is that Corinth was comprised of a group of house churches; and it was again Clement who ordered that the breaking of bread could be conducted only in one central place (1 Clement 40,41). He quenched the spirit, sought to institutionalize and contain the boundless function of the body of Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

March 4 Lev. 9, 10

Belief in the second coming must provoke the question: " What manner of persons ought (we) to be..." , as we hasten towards the day of judgment? " Wherefore, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him...without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:11,14). When Israel knew Yahweh was going to appear, they were to prepare themselves against that day by sacrifice and atonement (Lev. 9:4).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-11Christ_Will_Come.htm

Ps. 108, 109

There should be real comfort for us in knowing that prayer really is ‘heard’; the hearing is, in a sense, the answer / response, with which a man should be content. Therefore David desired to praise God even before the answer was received; the knowledge God was really hearing him gave such confidence (Ps. 108:1-6; 109:30).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-4prayer_changes_things.htm

2Cor. 1, 2

We are all members of the body of Christ; we each, therefore, have a potential influence for good upon the others in the body. Our comfort abounds by reason of the fact we are in Christ- in that whatever we each suffer, we suffer so that we may be able to comfort others in the

body (2 Cor. 1:4-7). Thus Paul could tell the Corinthians that he was afflicted for their comfort. Therefore just as surely as we suffer, so we will be comforted- in that others in the body have suffered in essence the same things, and have thereby been prepared by God to comfort us. But these wonderful statements all rely for their fulfilment upon human effort. They are not automatic. If the ecclesia does not respond positively to each other, the promise of receiving a hundredfold family, possessions etc. will not come true.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

March 5 Lev. 11

The structure of the law of Moses seemed to almost encourage this idea of serving God on different levels. After much study of it, the Rabbis concluded that there was within it "a distinction between holy and holy just as much as there is between holy and profane". Take the uncleanness laws. They basically said: 'Don't touch an unclean animal. If you do, there's a penalty. If you carry the carcass, there's a more serious penalty. And if you carry the carcass home and eat it, there's something more serious (Lev. 11). The highest ideal was not to touch the unclean thing. But there were concessions to weakness for those who either couldn't or wouldn't make the effort to attain the highest level of response to the will of God. God's acceptance of 'lower levels' should inspire us to live on the *highest* level we can- for we *love* Him and *want* to please Him!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-2Living_On_Different_Levels.htm

Ps. 110-112

Jesus is Lord of the kings of the earth; He has control over the world; therefore, no human power can harm us without His express permission and purpose. The exhortation of Ps. 110 is powerful: because Jesus is now seated at the Father's right hand, His people offer themselves as freewill offerings in this, the day of His power. They are arrayed in "holy attire" because He has been made the Priest after the order of Melchizedek- they share in the work which His exaltation has enabled (Ps. 110:1,3,4 RVmg.).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-25Jesus_Is_Lord.htm

2Cor. 3, 4

Hebrews so often uses the word "therefore"; because of the facts of the atonement, we can therefore come boldly before God's throne in prayer, with a true heart and clear conscience (Heb. 4:16). This "boldness" which the atonement has enabled will be reflected in our being 'bold' in our witness (2 Cor. 3:12; 7:4); our experience of imputed righteousness will lead us to have a confidence exuding through our whole being. This is surely why 'boldness' was such a characteristic and watchword of the early church (Acts 4:13,29,31; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 1:20; 1 Tim. 3:13; Heb. 10:19; 1 Jn. 4:17).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/6.htm>

March 6 Lev. 12, 13

Do we struggle with some secret vice, in the grip of habitual sin? The cross convicts of sin, for we are impelled by it to follow Christ in going forth "without the camp" (Heb. 13:13), following the path of the leper who had to go forth without the camp (Lev. 13:46). Note too how the Lord Jesus can feel with us the feelings of sinners- for He was treated as a leper, as a sinner, although He never personally sinned. Even when we sin this day, *in that sense* we are not separated from His fellow feelings with us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/3-3constrained_by_the_love_of_christ.htm

Ps. 113, 114

The word of God to His scribes really is, to the same gripping, terrifying degree, His direct word to us (Dt. 4:36; 5:45; 10:4). This explains why David repeatedly refers to the miracle at the Red Sea as if this had affected him personally, to the extent that he could ecstatically rejoice because of it. When Dt. 11:4 speaks of how "the Lord has destroyed [the Egyptians] unto this day", it sounds as if we are to understand each victory and achievement of God as somehow ongoing right down to our own day and our own lives and experience. Thus Ps. 114:5,6 RV describes the Red Sea as even now fleeing before God's people. And thus because of the records of God's past activities, we should be motivated in our decisions now. Josh. 24:13,14 reminds Israel of the record of their past history with God, and then on this basis exhorts them: "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him..." .

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp7.htm>

2Cor. 5-7

Our attitude to the second coming decides whether we will be in the Kingdom. In this sense we are judging ourselves, right now; we are formulating the outcome of the judgment seat by our attitude now towards the second coming. The proof for this lies in a group of passages which suggest that everyone who truly loves the return of his Lord will be in the Kingdom. Of course, a true love of His coming is only possible if we hold correct doctrine, and if our faith and behaviour is mature enough to be able to look with quiet joy and confidence towards that day. Thus our Lord said that all those whom He finds watching will be welcomed into the marriage feast (Lk. 12:37). And 2 Tim. 4:8 is plain enough: "All them also that love his appearing" will be rewarded along with Paul. Paul's own confidence in salvation was because he knew the earnestness of his desire to be "present with the Lord" Jesus (2 Cor. 5:8), such was the closeness of his relationship with Him. Is this really our attitude too? Can we feel like Simeon, that we are quite happy to die after we have just seen our Lord with our own eyes (Lk. 2:29)? Is there really much love between us and our Lord?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-5Loving_The_Appearing_Of_Christ.htm

March 7 Lev. 14

Reflect on the Mosaic legislation about lepers and menstruating women. Were those people really morally unclean before God because of bodily situations over which they had no control? Or was this not a legislation which had the intent of convicting all people of their

guilty state before God, and in the end, their need for salvation by grace alone? For the leper had to offer a guilt offering for being cleansed (Lev. 14). Was it not that the legislation was to convict of guilt regarding the human condition, rather than stating that some individual was more guilty than the one next to him simply because of a condition over which he had totally no control? Likewise, how could offering a sacrifice or paying a penalty in cash or goods really take away sin? Was the whole exercise not to convict us of guilt in order to prepare us for the way of escape through grace? A price must be paid for sin and for our guilt; we have to come to personally realize that. But that great price has been paid by the Lord, it's not for us to pay the price, but to respond in faith to the fact it has been paid. In passing, this approach to the Law would explain why at times forgiveness and reconciliation was possible during the Mosaic period by means other than the Mosaic legislation, or when it was imperfectly applied.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-5-2grace_and_guilt.htm

Ps. 115, 116

The Lord's description of the rejected being cut down and thrown into the fire (Mt. 7:19) is surely referring to the words in Dt. 12:3 (cp. 7:5); where the idols of the world were to be hewn down and thrown into the fire. The Lord understood that those who worship idols are like unto them (Ps. 115:8; 135:18). Because the idols will be destroyed in the last day, all who worship them will have to share their destruction. And yet we can be hewn down by God's word now (Hos. 6:5) rather than wait for God to do it to us by the condemnation process. We must cut off (s.w. hew down) our flesh now (Mt. 5:30; 18:8 cp. 7:19).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

2Cor. 8, 9

In appealing for the Corinthians to be generous, Paul points out that the Lord Jesus became a pauper for our sakes, and therefore, because of the riches of salvation He has given to us, the least we can do is to reach out into the lives of others with what riches we may have (2 Cor. 8:9 Gk.). This is why in 2 Cor. 8:1,19; 9:14, Paul uses the word "grace" to mean both the grace of God and also our grace (gifts) in works of response. Thus he talks of bringing the "grace" of the money collected for the poor saints; he is talking about the gift they had made; but in the same context he speaks of God's grace in Christ. If we have received the grace of God's forgiveness and salvation (and so much more) in Christ, we must show that grace, that gift, by giving. Our heart tells us to give, our heart is in our giving, it's a natural outcome of a believing mind (2 Cor. 9:5-8, J.B. Phillips). Our giving is a quite natural outcome of our faith in and experience of the cross.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-4Forsaking_All_We_Have.htm

March 8 Lev. 15

All Israel were to judge their neighbour "in righteousness" (Lev. 15:19; Ex. 1:17); and in allusion to this, the Lord bids us judge "righteous judgment". Our natural tendency is to flunk issues, avoid giving a judgment, leave it to someone else. And yet there is an imperative to judge others, for in doing so we reflect our experience of the Lord's gracious judgment of us.

There are frequently cases in ecclesial life which thrust themselves upon us; not least in the area of marriage failure. We can't dodge these issues, for fear of the reaction of others. Whenever issues arise, even if we avoid publicly giving our comment, we have a reaction and position. We have each one experienced the Lord's gracious judgment of us, and trust to yet receive it. If this experience has truly touched us, we will surely respond in how we judge others. We know His judgment, but we also know there is an essential tension within the personality of God, in that His mercy rejoices against His judgment. And we must reflect this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_5.htm

Ps. 117, 118

There is evidence within the text of the NT, in addition to church tradition, which would suggest that memorizing Scripture was a common feature of the early believers. A passage in Ps. 118 is referred to in Lk. 20:18; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6-8. One wonders if this was a proof text which the early believers would have known by heart. And one wonders likewise about Psalm 2- it is referred to so often. The early believers remained devoted to the instruction (lit. 'doctrinizing') given by the apostles. This might suggest rote learning. So, how about our memorizing Scripture, if we indeed claim to so live by it?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-6-3-5Memorizing_Scripture.htm

2Cor. 10, 11

When a preaching effort yields a much lower or higher response than anticipated: this is nothing else but the Lord Jesus working with us. He desires to manifest His meekness and gentleness through those who preach Him (2 Cor. 10:1). This very fact that He is working through His preachers ought to instil a far greater attention as to what manner of persons we are, as we reflect Him to this world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-7The_Spirit_Of_Jesus.htm

March 9 Lev. 16

Through Christ's death, the veil was torn open, so that we might enter into the Holiest "by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us...through the veil, that is to say [the sacrificing of] his flesh" (Heb. 10:19-22 Gk.). This assumes that the followers of Jesus are already in the position of the High Priest standing in the Holy Place, but through what He opened through the cross, each of us must now go through into the Most Holy. And what was the purpose of the High Priest's entry? To obtain forgiveness for others, to mediate for them, just as Jesus did on the cross. His cross compels us to not merely passively contemplate our own salvation, but to go deeper into the very presence of God in our ministry for others. Yet the High Priest had to cleanse himself meticulously; access had been limited to the Most Holy as a result of inadequate preparation by some in the past (Lev. 16:1,2). The Lord's death opened up the veil, for us to pass through with the utmost effort made by us in personal sanctification, in order to further God's glory in the salvation of others. We cannot simply refuse to enter, turn away from the torn veil. To do so is to turn away from what the cross has achieved, and to place ourselves outside its scope. We must go forward, go onwards into the presence of God to replicate in essence the Saviour's work, with the awed and humble spirit

of the High Priest entering the Holiest on the day of atonement. He would surely have carefully analysed his motives, as to why he was passing through that veil, and whether he was sufficiently personally sanctified for the work he was doing. He would have been comforted by knowing that his motives were solely for the glorification of his God in the redemption for his people which he was seeking to obtain.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/2.htm>

Ps. 119:1-40

David's view of the Kingdom and his longing for it, were not expressed in terms of his exulting that he would live for ever in a time when all present problems had vanished. Instead, he and other men of God have looked forward to the time when they would be perfectly spiritual. Ps.119:5,6 is an example of this: " O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes (in this life); then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Thy commandments" . David looked forward to the Kingdom as a time when he would be totally obedient to God's will, as expressed in His commandments. David therefore asks that God will help him in this life to be obedient to them. Our love of righteousness now will therefore be proportionate to the fulfilment which we experience in the Kingdom. David's view of the Kingdom was of a time when he would be obedient to all the commands.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/27.htm>

2Cor. 12, 13

There is fair emphasis on Corinth's willing belief of the vicious denigration of Paul's character, made by some of their elders (1 Cor.2:16; 3:10; 4:11-14; 9:20-27; 14:18). The depths to which that ecclesia sunk are hard to plumb. And yet Paul believed that they abounded in love for him; he asks them to abound in their generosity to others as they abounded in their love for him (2 Cor. 12:7). Truly Paul reflected his own experience of having righteousness imputed to him.

So the relationship between Paul and Corinth is fascinating, but above all it's instructive of not only how we should relate to each other, but how Christ relates to us. There is a strange paradox throughout the letters to Corinth. Paul uses the most exalted and positive language about them, enthusing about the certainty of their salvation, and yet he also accuses them of the most incredible spiritual weaknesses. His great wish was their " perfection" (2 Cor. 13:9). Paul's deep-seated love for Corinth was absolutely evident to all who knew them; it was not an act of the will, which occurred just within Paul's mind. So often our 'love' for difficult members of the ecclesia is no more than a grimly made act of the will. And it was this basic love which was in Paul's heart which led him to a wonderful spirit of hopefulness; so that even towards the end of his second letter he can speak of his "hope, that as your faith groweth, we shall be magnified in you" (2 Cor. 10:15 RV). " I will bewail many that have sinned...if I come again, I will not spare" (2 Cor.12:21; 13:2) is actually an allusion to Ez.8:18: " Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here (in the natural and spiritual temple of Yahweh, cp. 2 Cor.6:16)?...therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them" . God's anger with Israel as expressed at the Babylonian invasion was going to be reflected in Paul's 'coming' to spiritual Israel in Corinth. Yet for all his high powered allusions, Paul mixed them with the most incredible

expressions of true love and sympathy for Corinth. In this we see the giant spiritual stature of that man Paul.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-9Paul_And_Corinth.htm

March 10 Lev. 17, 18

Severed from the vine, we can do nothing. Likewise the man under the Old Covenant who made his offering of, e.g. an ox, at a place other than at " the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" was viewed as having shed blood and therefore was to be cut off from the congregation (Lev. 17:3,4). The Law foresaw that there would be this tendency, to worship God away from the rest of the congregation. Those who did so were condemned in the strongest terms: their sacrifice of an animal was seen as the murder of their brother, whereas they would have seen it as an expression of their righteousness. " He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man" (Is. 66:3) refers back to this, making it parallel with idolatry and proudly refusing to let God's word dwell in the heart.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-4Christian_Disillusion_With_Christianity.htm

Ps. 119:41-80

David could write: "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments" (Ps. 119:60). We cannot be passive on receiving the opportunity to serve God. We will urgently seek to do something with what we have been enabled to do for the Lord. Once we perceive God's will over something, how quickly do we "haste" to do it?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/20-3urgent_response_to_the_gospel.htm

Lk. 1

Luke saw a link between the Lord's death and His whole life when he says that they had been "eyewitnesses" of the Lord's ministry, using the Greek word for autopsy- Luke saw his record of the Lord's life as being an autopsy of His death (Lk. 1:2). Perhaps this idea explains why Paul likens the Lord on the cross to the body of the criminal lifted up after death, not in order to lead to death (Gal. 3:13; Dt. 21:23)- as if he understood the Lord to have been effectively dead unto sin at the time the body was lifted up on the cross. We are asked to carry the Lord's cross daily- and His cross was part of His daily life. That's the point, and that's the challenge.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-4-2ongoing_crucifixion_and_death.htm

March 11 Lev. 19

Proverbs is often a commentary upon the Law. The many passages there about gossiping are based upon just one passage, in Lev. 19:16-18: " Thou shall not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people...thou shalt not hate thy neighbour in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise (frankly, NIV) rebuke thy neighbour...thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge...but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" . The fact this passage is expanded upon so many times in Proverbs would indicate that gossip was as major a problem among the old

Israel as it is among the new. But notice the fine psychology of the Spirit here: gossip in the church is related to having a grudge, to hating your neighbour in your heart, to not loving your neighbour as you love yourself (and we are very conservative about our own failings). When the Lord spoke about hating your brother being the same as murdering him (Mt. 5:22; 1 Jn. 3:15), he may well have been thinking of this passage in Leviticus. To hate your brother in your heart, to gossip about him, was and is as bad as murdering him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-4-1Gossip_In_The_Church.htm

Ps. 119:81-120

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day...for the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Is.60:19) does not mean that the literal sun will be destroyed. The true light is God's word (Ps.119:105); in the Kingdom, we will not be conscious of whether there is or is not a sun or moon. The revelation of God to us through His word will totally fill our consciousness; it is in the light of this that we will see all things, rather than seeing things physically in the light of a literal sun. It will not be a case of the sight of our eyes giving us some kind of heightened aesthetic pleasure in the Kingdom; the mental vision and insight into God's character which we will then have will be all we are aware of.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/27.htm>

Lk. 2

As Simeon held the baby Jesus in his arms, he saw in that beautiful little boy something terrible; for he looked ahead to how His soul would one day be pierced in crucifixion, "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk. 2:35). The same word is used for how thoughts will be revealed at the judgment (Mt. 10:26; 1 Cor. 3:13; 4:5). In the piercing of the Son of God, the thoughts of hearts would be revealed. Our reflections upon the cross each day give us a foretaste of our feelings at the day of judgment, and empower realistic self-examination.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

March 12 Lev. 20

We are told that whoever broke the Sabbath, "the same soul will I destroy from among his people" (Lev. 23:30). Yet there is no evidence of this ever happening; indeed, the prophets criticize Israel for repeatedly breaking the Sabbath. The idea of destroying from among the people, 'cutting off' from Israel, are parallel with being blotted out of God's book. That blotting out, that cutting off, happens now in God's sight; but that judgment won't be articulated until judgment day. There is no record of God zapping people dead for, e.g., offering their seed to Molech, which earned the condemnation of being 'cut off from among the people' (Lev. 20:6). It was God who cut them off in His own judgment, from amongst those whom He perceives to be His people. God is not asleep as it were, taking no notice of our lives until He opens the books at the last day. He is actively watching, weighing up and judging our lives *now*- today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

Ps. 119:121-176

“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments” (Ps. 119:176) was likely written by David with his mind on his follies relating to Bathsheba. Even in his spiritual low state, he still remembered the commandments. He didn’t turn his back on God; and neither do we, in our semi-spiritual unspirituality. This is our danger; we can stray from God and yet at that same time be legalistically obedient to commandments. And this can blind us to true, personal understanding of God’s message because of our refusal to truly repent.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-4Davids_Repentance.htm

Lk. 3

Think through the implications of Lk. 3:4, where we read that John’s preaching was in order to make [s.w. ‘to bring forth fruit’] His [the Lord’s] paths straight- but the ways of the Lord are “right” [s.w. “straight”] anyway (Acts 13:10). So how could John’s preaching make the Lord’s ways straight / right, when they already are? God is so associated with His people that their straightness or crookedness reflects upon Him; for they are His witnesses in this world. His ways are their ways. This is the N.T. equivalent of the O.T. concept of keeping / walking in the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19; 2 Kings 21:22). Perhaps this is the thought behind the exhortation of Heb. 12:13 to make straight paths for our own feet. We are to bring our ways into harmony with the Lord’s ways; for He is to be us, His ways our ways. Thus Is. 40:3, which is being quoted in Lk. 3:4, speaks of “Prepare ye the way of the Lord”, whereas Is. 62:10 speaks of “Prepare ye the way of the people”. Yet tragically, the way / path of Israel was not the way / path of the Lord (Ez. 18:25). We are not only Jesus to this world but also effectively we are the witness to God Himself. We minister His care to others; to the extent that Paul could write both that he was a minister of God, and also a minister of the church (2 Cor. 6:4; Col. 1:24,25).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-7preaching_as_christ_did.htm

March 13 Lev. 21

Having spoken of how we are bidden by God to the ‘feast’ of the Kingdom, lived out by us in prospect and symbol at the breaking of bread, the Lord goes on to say: “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection” (Lk. 14:13,14). This inevitably is to be connected with how the Lord went on to say that we are the poor, blind, lame etc. who have been invited to the feast (Lk. 14:21). The point being, that if we perceive our own desperation and inappropriacy to be called to the Kingdom feast, then we will likewise invite others who are perceived by us as the lowest of the low, and otherwise unsuitable for a king’s banquet table. So we are to reflect God’s calling of us, the desperate, the down and outs, in our calling of others. A person who feels they are somehow a nice guy and worthy of invitation will be the one who tends to consider others as unworthy of invitation to the Kingdom. He or she who perceives their own desperation will eagerly invite even those they consider to be in the very pits of human society. The lame, blind etc. were not allowed to serve God under the law (Lev. 21:18), nor be offered as sacrifices (Dt. 15:21), nor come within the holy city (2 Sam. 5:6-8). The Lord purposefully healed multitudes of

lame and blind (Mt. 15:30), and allowed them to come to Him in the temple (Mt. 21:14). His acted out message was clearly that those who were despised as unfit for God's service were now being welcomed by Him into that service. The lame and blind were despised because they couldn't work. They had to rely on the grace of others. Here again is a crucial teaching: those called are those who can't do the works, but depend upon grace.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-3more_real_the_more_credible.htm

Ps. 120-124

If we're really confident in prayer being answered, we won't be shy to openly state to others that we've prayed about something and expect the answer to be coming. Paul even asks Philemon to prepare his bedroom for him, because he's so confident that prayers will be answered, and he'll be able to come to him. Another example would be how Hezekiah prays to be 'delivered' (Ps. 120:2) from the Assyrian invasion. Rabshakeh had heard of this even in the enemy camp, and warned the people of Jerusalem not to trust in Hezekiah's promise to them that his prayer would be answered and therefore "the Lord will surely deliver us" (Is. 36:18). Another lesson from this latter example is that prayerful attitudes spread- for Hezekiah had prayed for God to 'deliver' "my soul" (Ps. 120:2)- and yet the people therefore came to believe that the Lord would surely deliver "us", i.e. all of them and not just Hezekiah personally as he had initially prayed. Bear in mind a simple point. Prayer should precede action. We pray, then act. Not act, and then pray as a kind of insurance policy taken out after the event. Analyze your prayers from this perspective. If they are the prayers of faith, then we will be praying before acting. If we believe that prayer actually changes things, then we will not use it as an after-the-event insurance policy.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-4prayer_changes_things.htm

Lk. 4

Luke records how the Angel summarised the Lord's work as good news of great joy for all men (Lk. 2:10). The Gospel concludes by asking us to take that message to all men. Straight away we are challenged to analyze our preaching of the Gospel: is it a telling of "great joy" to others, or merely a glum 'witness' or a seeking to educate them 'how to read the Bible more effectively', or a sharing with them the conclusions of our somewhat phlegmatic Biblical researches? Whatever we teach, it must be a joyful passing on of good news of "great joy". The Lord began His ministry by proclaiming a freedom from burdens through Him (Lk. 4). And He concludes it by telling the disciples to proclaim the same deliverance (Lk. 24:47). Consider how He brings together various passages from Isaiah in His opening declaration in Lk. 4:18:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach [proclaim] [Heb. 'call out to a man'] the acceptable year of the Lord".

This combines allusions to Is. 61:1 (Lev. 25:10); Is. 58:6 LXX and Is. 61:2.

Is. 58:6 AV: "To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free (cp. Dt. 15:12 re freedom of slaves, s.w.), and that ye break every yoke?" is

in the context of an insincerely kept year of Jubilee in Hezekiah's time, after the Sennacherib invasion. Is. 58 has many Day of Atonement allusions- the year of Jubilee began on this feast. We are as the High Priest declaring the reality of forgiveness to the crowd. Hence Lk. 24:47 asks us to proclaim a Jubilee of atonement. The Greek for "preach" in Lk. 24:47 and for "preach / proclaim the acceptable year" in Lk. 4:19 are the same, and the word is used in the LXX for proclaiming the Jubilee. And the LXX word used for 'jubilee' means remission, release, forgiveness, and it is the word used to describe our preaching / proclaiming forgiveness in Lk. 24:47. It could be that we are to see the cross as the day of atonement, and from then on the Jubilee should be proclaimed in the lives of those who accept it. It's as if we are running round telling people that their mortgages have been cancelled, hire purchase payments written off...and yet we are treated as telling them something unreal, when it is in fact so real and pertinent to them. And the very fact that Yahweh has released others means that we likewise ought to live in a spirit of releasing others from their debts to us: "The creditor shall release that which he hath lent...because the Lord's release hath been proclaimed" (Dt. 15:2RV).

We can't have a spirit of meanness in our personal lives if we are proclaiming Yahweh's release.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/5-7great_commission_in_mark_and_luke.htm

March 14 Lev. 22

for a freewill offering, He would accept a deformed animal (Lev. 22:23), even though this was against His preferred principle of absolute perfection in offerings. There was no atonement without the shedding of blood; and yet for the very poor, God would accept a non-blood sacrifice. This all reflected the zeal of God to accept fallen men. The relationship between Solomon and his bride in the Song is evidently typical of ours with the Lord. Yet she has major problems: he always addresses her directly, yet she always answers indirectly ("he cometh...he standeth...he brought me"), often with some awkwardness and sense that she is unworthy of his love, and that his glowing descriptions of her are exaggeration. She is depicted as in doubt, lost, asleep, uncertain, reluctant, moody, sometime in love with him sometimes not, in need of reassurance despite the greatness of his love ("let him kiss me...").

Believers aren't good people. But the Biblical evidence is that those who will be in the Kingdom basically love God, but really feel they shouldn't be in His Kingdom. There is much Biblical reason to believe that we should be positive about the fact we will surely be in the Kingdom. And yet the Biblical pictures of the judgment indicate that the accepted will not have grasped this aspect as strongly as they might have done. And this is exactly, exactly the position which I sense so many of us are in: not believing as strongly as we might the positive fact that we really will be in the Kingdom because we are in Christ, and yet experiencing answered prayer, basically holding on, albeit with a deeper sense of their unworthiness than of God's grace. These characteristics, which are clearly seen in so many of us, are the very characteristics of the faithful in the Biblical descriptions of the judgment. And therefore, many of us will be in the Kingdom of God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-1-3Believers_Arent_Good_People.htm

Ps. 125-127

Rom. 6:19 speaks of how the ever increasing downward spiral of obedience to sin is turned round at baptism, so that we begin an upward spiral of obedience to righteousness. God does good unto those that are good, but leads those who turn aside even further astray (Ps. 125:4,5). Those who are "[born] of God" are able to hear and understand God's words (Jn. 8:47)- and baptism is surely how we are born of God (Jn. 3:3-5). This seems to open up the possibility of yet higher growth once we are baptized- it's all an upward spiral, like any functional relationship.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm

Lk. 5

Capturing the spirit of Isaiah, Peter fell down at Christ's feet: " Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" . But the Lord responded: " Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Lk. 5:8-10). So Peter's deep recognition of his sinfulness resulted in him being given a preaching commission. And in similar vein, Peter was given another commission to teach the word the first time he met Christ after his denials (Jn. 21:15-17). Our experience of forgiveness must be the basis for our personal witness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

March 15 Lev. 23

The Angels who gave the Law of Moses are often mentioned specifically as instituting the sabbath (e.g. Ex. 31:3; Ez. 20:12,13,16,20)- because it is "the sabbath (the rest) of the Lord" (Lev. 23:3)- i. e. of the Angels who rested on that day back in Genesis. The fact man was to physically rest on the sabbath as a replica of how the Angels "rested" on that day implies that they too physically rested. This limitation of Angelic power opens a window into what eternity will be like for us (Lk. 20:35,36). For we will share their present nature.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels1.htm>

Ps. 128-130

We must forgive our brethren as God forgives us (Eph. 4:32). God expunges the spiritual record of the sin, and will not feed it into some equation which determines whether we can be forgiven. Christ " frankly" forgave the debtors in the parable. The frankness of that forgiveness does not suggest a process of careful calculation before it could be granted. God's frank forgiveness is seen too in Ps. 130:3: " If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?" . God does not " mark" sin, as our love for our brethren should keep no record of their past sins (1 Cor. 13:5-7 N.I.V.). If we refuse fellowship people because of the effect of past sins for which they have repented, then we are 'marking' iniquity. God does not deal with us in a manner which is proportional to the type or amount of sin we commit (Ps. 103:7-12).

You will probably encounter brethren who will seek to persuade you that we must make a difference between certain categories of sin, concluding that some sin must be repented of openly, and other sin (e.g. a fit of anger) can be repented of privately. But you must really

consider what Biblical proof there is for this? Is this what the Bible really says about repentance?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-3-1What_Is_Repentance.htm

Lk. 6

If we condemn ourselves in our self-examination, we will not be condemned (1 Cor. 11:31). We are to most importantly [Gk. proton] “cast out” the beam from our own eye (Lk. 6:42)- and the Lord uses the same word about the ‘casting forth’ of the rejected at the last day. We are to judge our own weaknesses as worthy of condemnation. We must examine ourselves and conclude that at the end of the day we are "unprofitable servants" (Lk. 18:10), i.e. worthy of condemnation (the same phrase is used about the rejected, Mt. 25:30). This is the basis for a true humility and verve in the Lord's service.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

March 16 Lev. 24

The lampstand is a symbol of the ecclesia; the lamps are us. The oil is the spirit of Jesus. Aaron was as Jesus. He daily ‘orders’ us, enabling us to shine (Lev. 24:4). Jesus understood this to be so in saying that He came to fan mens’ lamps into brighter light, to mend smoking flax, not give up on it. And He is actively about this work on a daily basis as were the priests.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-7The_Spirit_Of_Jesus.htm

Ps. 131-134

David at times writes in the Psalms as if he sees himself from outside of himself. Ps. 132 is a good example, where he speaks of David in all his afflictions. Ps. 131:2 RV has him speaking of stilling and quieting his soul like a mother does a child- as if he saw himself as the mother to his own soul, talking to himself. This ability to see ourselves from outside of ourselves is vital in succesful self-examination. Another take on these passages of course is that David's prayers were re-written by another inspired hand.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/12.htm>

Lk. 7

Enthusiasm for Israel's response to the Gospel comes out when the grace of Jesus likens Himself to a street kid in the market who really wanted to get a game going with the other kids. He offered to play funerals with them (through His appeal through John the Baptist), but they refused. He then offered to play weddings (through His Gospel of grace, joy and peace), but still they refused (Lk. 7:32). By all means connect this with another market place parable, where Christ (the servant) comes there to try to recruit labourers, on almost unbelievably good rates. The Lord's enthusiasm for the salvation of first century Israel (and us too) comes out in Lk. 14:5 RSV, where He likens the urgency of His mission to that of a man whose son has fallen down a well. He simply must get there, regardless of the Sabbath rules. And this, says the Lord, is His all out urgency to save men. We have all fallen down the pit from

whence we must be rescued (Zech. 9:11). As we distribute leaflets, place our adverts, talk to our contacts, strive in our own character development towards salvation; this is the verve of the Lord Jesus to save us. It is only the hardness of the human heart that can stand in the way of the mighty enthusiasm of the Son of God for our redemption.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-4The_Grace_Of_Jesus.htm

March 17 Lev. 25

Paul reasons that we enter the body of Christ by baptism; and nobody hates their own body. He feeds and cares for it. This not only means that the Lord will likewise care for us. It means that we now have the basis of self-respect and a healthy love of self [the kind the Lord had in mind when He said we should love our neighbour as we love ourselves]. Because we are to count ourselves as the body of Christ, we no longer need wallow in the feeling that we are so unworthy, we aren't worth making the effort with. And therefore we should truly love our brother; Lev. 25:38 reasons that because of Israel's experience of the Red Sea redemption, therefore they were to have a generous spirit to their brother. Because the Egyptians were hard taskmasters, and Israel had been graciously saved from them, therefore they were not to be hard on each other (Lev. 25:40). If the oppressed [as Israel were oppressed] cry out unto you [as Israel cried out for their affliction], you must hear them, otherwise God will hear them and punish you, as if you are the Egyptian taskmaster (Ex. 22:24-27). Indeed, the whole Law of Moses is shot through with direct and indirect reference to the Red Sea experience. It was as if this was to be the motivator for their obedience and upholding of the culture of kindness which the Law sought to engender (Lev.23, 24; Dt. 17:7; 24:19-24). And our experience of redemption from this world ought to have the same effect.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-15Entering_The_Body_Of_Christ.htm

Ps. 135, 136

The Baal cult was a fertility cult. The idea was that by sleeping with the temple prostitutes, Baal would provide fertility in family life and also good harvests and fullness of bread. Yet Yahweh was the giver of bread to Israel (Ex. 16:29 cp. Dt. 8:18; Ps. 136:25; Ps. 146:7). For Israel to trust Baal for these things was a denial of Him. We're surrounded by materialism, the belief that it's your pay packet or pension cheque which is your giver of bread. And as Old Testament Scripture continually alludes to and warns against the Baal cult, so it speaks to us too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Lk. 8

The synoptic Gospels use the same words for the activities of both Jesus and the disciples in respect of preaching, teaching, healing etc. Theirs was a shared ministry. Thus Jesus is recorded as "showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom" (Lk. 8:1), but in the same context He asks a new convert to go home "and shew how great things God hath done" (8:39), as if he were to continue the 'showing' of Jesus. If we're in Christ, we are His witnesses to this world. He is us and we are Him to the surrounding people- especially in our "home".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-7preaching_as_christ_did.htm

March 18 Lev. 26

Daniel's prayer seems to have been motivated in the first place by his appreciation of God's promise that if Israel confessed their sins when in captivity, He would turn again to them (Lev. 26:40), as well as his knowledge that Jeremiah had prophesied that when Israel intensely prayed, God would turn again their captivity (Jer. 29:12,13). Not only did the word motivate Daniel's prayer, but his prayer almost breathes his saturation with it- see http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm . Is our daily reading of the word influencing our prayers today?

Ps. 137-139

Prayer, coupled with the knowledge that God knows all we are feeling, enables us to take our feelings, absolutely as they are, with no rough edges smoothed off them...to God Himself. Pour them all out in prayer and leave Him to resolve the matter. In passing, this fits in with the conclusions of modern psychiatry- that we can't eliminate our feelings, so we must express them in an appropriate way. The writer of Psalm 137, sitting angry and frustrated by a Babylonian riverside, with his harp hanging on a willow branch, being jeered ("tormented" Ps. 137:3 RVmg.) by the victorious Babylonian soldiers who had led him away captive...he felt so angry with them. Especially when they tried to make him sing one of the temple songs ("sing us one of the songs of Zion"). And, as a bitter man does, his mind went from one hurt to another. He remembered how when Babylon had invaded, the Edomites hadn't helped their Hebrew brethren (Obadiah 11,12). They had egged on the Babylonian soldiers in ripping down the temple, saying "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation". And so in anger and bitterness this Jew prays with tears, as he remembered Zion, "O daughter of Babylon...happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock" (:8,9 RV). God read those angry words as a prayer, and in some sense they will have their fulfillment. For these words are picked up in Rev. 18:8,21 and applied to what will finally happen to Babylon. Her spiritual children will be dashed against the rock of Christ, the stone of Daniel 2:44, at His return. He will dash in pieces the Babylon-led people that oppose Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-4God_Sees_And_Knows_All.htm

Lk. 9

The only people to be rejected at the day of judgment will be those who have condemned themselves, and the Lord will simply confirm this to them in His final verdict. If we are ashamed of Him now, we will be ashamed from before Him then (1 Jn. 2:28), and He will be ashamed of us (Lk. 9:26). Every time we are asked to stand up for Him and His words in the eyes of men, we are as it were living out our future judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

March 19 Lev. 27

God told Israel that He wanted altars made of earth; but He knew they would want to make altars of stone like the other nations, and He made allowance for this (Ex. 20:24,25). The Law has several examples of this living on different levels. " Ye shall let nothing of (the Passover) remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire" (Ex. 12:10) is an evident example. God foresaw their disobedience to His stated principle, and made a concession and provision. Or take the Law's ruling about tithes: "...neither shall he change it: and if he change it..." (Lev. 27:33).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-2Living_On_Different_Levels.htm

Ps. 140-142

A man's words are counted as who he is:

"Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler [same word translated 'tongue'] is no better" (Ecc. 10:11)

"Ye are taken up in the lips of talkers [s.w. tongue]" (Is. 59:3)

"Let not an evil speaker [s.w. tongue] be established" (Ps. 140:11)

We will therefore be judged by our words- for they are us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-16Controlling_Our_Words.htm

Lk. 10

The Lord's teaching about the cross was "hid from them" (Lk. 9:45), much to the Lord's distress. And yet in prayer to the Father, He rejoices that these things are not hid from them (Lk. 10:21,23). This is a picture of the Lord's present mediation for us in prayer. He is very *positive* about us to the Father, but realistic and even critical of us in human life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-7Disciples_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

March 20 Num 1

Wrath would come upon all Israel if the Levites weren't encamped around the tabernacle (Num. 1:53). The curses of Dt. 28:4,18 involved cursing coming upon descendants of sinful people; perhaps in that their fathers influenced them to do wrong. Thus the salvation of men can be affected by a third party not preaching to them or not teaching them correct doctrine. Herein lies the crying need to 'defend the Faith'.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-3power_of_preaching.htm

Ps. 143, 144

There's a Hebrew word, *siyakh*, which means to commune with oneself; it's a clear reference to what I'm calling 'self-talk'. David speaks of how he 'muses', or talks to himself, about the wonder of God's natural creation (Ps. 143:5) and His past acts in the history of Israel. We

have to ask ourselves whether, for all our familiarity with the Biblical text, these things are actually part of our self-talk? The word occurs in Ps. 55:17, where it's translated 'pray'. This self-talk is perhaps the very essence of prayer; this speaking to ourselves is in fact a speaking to God. That's how we can live the life of continual prayer which busy men like David and Paul claim to have lived. David especially speaks of how he communes with his own heart at night (Ps. 77:6; 119:148 s.w.)- this in particular is the time for self-talk.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-5self_talk.htm

Lk. 11

The Lord had to comment that the harvest was great, but the labourers [i.e. the disciples] were few or weak [Lk. 10:2 Gk.]. And yet He delegated so much to them- authority, the power of miracles, the Gospel itself (Lk. 9:1-6), despite their weakness, and despite the fact much harvest was spoilt or not harvested by their weakness. They were His representatives to the world (Lk. 10:16)- and yet they still didn't know how to pray (Lk. 11:1). We marvel at the way the Lord used them, and yet we end up realizing with a similar amazement that the same Lord has entrusted His Gospel to us, with all our weakness and dysfunction.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-8Preaching_Of_The_Twelve.htm

March 21 Num 2

s. 60:2 speaks of the sun rising upon Zion- as if Zion was the whole earth to God. Ps. 89:12 shows how God reckons the points of the compass with reference to Jerusalem: " The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor (in the west) and Hermon (in the east) shall rejoice" . Likewise " the sea" is often used to show that the west is intended, the Mediterranean being to the west of Jerusalem (Num. 2:18; Josh. 16:5,6; Ez. 42:19). " The east" is put for Persia, Media and the lands east of Jerusalem (Ez. 25:4; Mt. 2:1); " the south" for Egypt, south of Canaan (Jer. 13:19; Dan. 11:5), or for the negev, the hill country south of Jerusalem (Gen. 12:9; 13:1,3; Ez. 20:46,47); " the north" is put for Babylon (Jer. 1:13-15 etc.). This would all explain why Is. 20:6 (Heb.) describes Israel as an island in God's eyes. This, to Him, was 'the world'. The point of all this is that God is in one sense "believer centric"- His world revolves around us. And our worldview likewise should have Him and His people as the centre.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-5Is_A_Social_Gospel_Biblical.htm

Ps. 145-147

God's word is a living word. Unlike other history, we can see the intense personal relevance of all God's past dealings with men. David at times gets ecstatic for what God had done at the Red Sea; one generation would tell the Passover story to another, they too would sing as Miriam had done (Ps. 145:4-7). Through sensitive reading of the word we can passionately enter into the thrill of God's ways. We can perceive how we too stand day by day at the crossroads, to eternal life or eternal death; how we too hold our futures in our hands, living out our lives as in the judgment presence of the Father and Son. And the memory of the sufferings of our Lord can likewise jolt us out of the 'don't care' mindset of this world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-9grieving_for_others.htm

Lk. 12

Practically and concretely, how will we be gathered to judgment? How? When? It seems that the Angels will suddenly appear to us in the course of our mundane lives, and invite us to go to meet Christ. "The reapers" of the harvest "are the angels"; it is they who will gather the believers, and then divide them into wheat and tares (Mt. 13:40-42). As men gather in a net and sort out the fish, so the angels will at judgment day (Mt. 13:47-50). "Men (angels) gather (the branches), and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (Jn. 15:6). This same equation of men and angels is seen in Lk. 6:38, this time concerning how the angels will mete out rewards as well as punishment at the judgment: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together...shall men (angels) give into your bosom (at the judgment; ordinary men certainly don't do so in this life!). For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again"- very much the language of judgment to come (Lk. 6:38 cp. Mt. 7:1,2). This association of "men" (angels) with the judgment is fitting, seeing that our guardian angel will have been with us through every up and down of life. Speaking of the principle of responsibility upon which our judgment will be conducted, the Lord hints at this: "to whom men (our guardian angels?) have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Lk. 12:48).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_3.htm

March 22 Num 3

he priests weren't part-timers. They gave their lives to God in recognition of the fact that God had saved the lives of the firstborn at the Passover and Red Sea deliverance (Num. 3:12). Our deliverance from the world at baptism was our Red Sea. We have been saved. Those firstborns represent us, the ecclesia of firstborns (Heb. 12:23 Gk.). We are now being led towards that glorious Kingdom, when by rights we ought to be lying dead in that dark Egyptian night. The wonder of it all demands that like the Levites, we give our lives back to God, in service towards His children.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-2-3Priesthood_Today.htm

Ps. 148-150

There is a link between the name Yahweh, and praise. Halle-lu-YAH is saying that for the sake of the Name Yah, therefore praise Him. David sat down and designed musical instruments because of the Name (2 Chron. 7:6). The Psalms often make the link explicit, e.g. "...give thanks unto Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise" (Ps. 106:47). The Name and praise are paralleled. If we know the beauty and wonder of God's Name, His very being, this is of itself an imperative to praise. He alone is worthy of praise because His Name alone is exalted (Ps. 148:13). How deep is our praise of God today, as a result of our reflection upon His Name?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Lk. 13, 14

“Strive to enter in [now] at the strait gate: for many [at judgment day] will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Lk. 13:24). Our attitude to seeking the Lord now will be the attitude we have then. The emotion and reality of the judgment experience will not essentially change our attitude to the Lord. If we have “boldness” in prayer now (Heb. 4:16), then we will have “boldness in the day of judgment”. How we feel to Him now is how we will then.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-5real_prayer.htm

March 23 Num 4

The wealth Israel took from Egypt was to be given back to His service- not carried with them through the wilderness wandering until they died or left it to their kids. Quite a challenge for us who likewise have left Egypt through baptism and walk the desert walk.

Pro 1

There is a Biblical theme of the rejected later seeking acceptance. "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you (quoted in Rom. 2:8 re. the judgment). Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me" (Prov. 1:27,28). Now is the today of salvation; *now* is the time to call upon God, and not wait until being rejected at the day of judgment to do it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_3.htm

Lk. 15

The shepherd-owner calls his “friends” together. This surely refers to the clubs the Pharisees formed in villages, called the Khaburim [‘friends’]. They ought to have rejoiced to be eating with sinners, as the Lord was- but they wouldn’t. The whole context of the three parables is the Lord justifying why he ate at home with sinners, thereby showing that He considered them as somehow ‘in fellowship’ with Him. The Pharisees wouldn’t do this unless those people repented and learnt Torah in great depth. But the Lord is surely saying that He sees those men who ate with Him as the sheep which has already been brought home. He reflected the gracious outlook with which He saw people; and His hopefulness that by treating a person as if they had ‘come home’, then they would indeed do so. Probing this line further, the Lord Jesus speaks of the found sheep as being symbolic of the repentant. But the sheep did nothing- it was simply acceptant of having been found. To accept being found is, therefore, seen by the Lord as what He calls ‘repentance’. Now surely that’s grace- salvation without works.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a2-5The_Elder_Brother.htm

March 24 Num 5

If a man's wife committed adultery he could have her killed; or he could put her through the trial of jealousy of Num. 5, with the result that she would become barren; or he could divorce her (Dt. 22:19; 24:1 RV; Lev. 21:14; 22:13). Within a Law that was holy, just and good

(Rom. 7:12), unsurpassed in its righteousness (Dt. 4:8; and let us not overlook these estimations), there were these different levels of response possible. But there was a higher level: he could simply forgive her. This was what God did with His fickle Israel, time and again (Hos. 3:1-3). And so the Israelite faced with an unfaithful wife could respond on at least four levels. This view would explain how divorce seems outlawed in passages like Dt. 22:19,29, and yet there are other parts of the OT which seem to imply that it was permitted. It should be noted that there were some concessions to weakness under the Law which the Lord was not so willing to make to His followers (e.g., outside the marriage context, Dt. 20:5-8 cp. Lk. 9:59-62; 14:18,19). He ever held before us the Biblical ideal of marriage. If there are different levels acceptable before God, seeing we love Him and wish to please Him, we're thereby enabled to *choose* to serve Him at the highest possible level.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-3Biblical_Ideal_Of_Marriage.htm

Pro 2

Solomon was aware, at least theoretically, of the foolish path he was going down with Gentile women. God had inspired him with the wisdom of Prov. 2:16,17, which warned that wisdom would save a man from the Gentile woman who made a covenant with the God of Israel in her youth (in order to marry an Israelite, by implication), but soon forgot it. This was exactly, exactly the case of Solomon; yet he just couldn't see the personal relevance of his own wisdom to himself. And how much of our knowledge do we fail to personally apply?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-2The_Song_Of_Solomon.htm

Lk. 16

The Lord taught us that we should have a sense of urgency in our response to others. The Lord showed by His example that it is better to meet the hunger of human need than to keep the letter of Sabbath rules (Mk. 2:25,26). His urgency, God's urgency, our consequent urgency...all means that when even Divine principles appear to come into conflict, we are to be influenced above all by the urgency of others' need. "Which of you shall have a son fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up?" (Lk. 14:5 RV). Wells weren't that wide. Only a small child would fall down one. We can imagine the tragic situation in the home. "Benny's fallen down the well!" . And everyone would go running. They wouldn't wait until the Saturday evening. Nor would they worry the slightest about infringing the letter of the law. And so, the Lord explained, that little boy was like the sick men and women, sick both physically and spiritually, whom He saw around Him. There was an urgency which He felt about them. And so there should be with us too. We can realize that this world is evil and vain; and yet we can still fail to perceive the tragedy of it all, and the urgency of our task to save at least some. The Father of the prodigal told the servants: "Bring forth quickly the best robe" (Lk. 15:22 RV). The indebted man was told to sit down quickly and have his debt reduced (Lk. 16:6). There is an urgency in the mediation of mercy towards others.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/20.htm>

March 25 Num 6

Paul was called to be a preacher of the Gospel, and yet he speaks of his work as a preacher as if it were a Nazarite vow- which was a totally voluntary commitment. Consider not only the reference to him shaving his head because of his vow (Acts 18:18; 21:24 cp. Num. 6:9-18), but also the many descriptions of his preaching work in terms of Nazariteship:

- Separated unto the Gospel's work (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:15; Acts 13:2)

- "I am not yet consecrated / perfected" (Phil. 3:12)- he'd not yet finished his 'course', i.e. his preaching commission. He speaks of it here as if it were a Nazarite vow not yet ended. Note the reference to his 'consecration' in Acts 20:24.

- His undertaking not to drink wine lest he offend others (Rom. 14:21) is framed in the very words of Num. 6:3 LXX about the Nazarite.

- Likewise his being 'joined unto the Lord' (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 14:6,8) is the language of Num. 6:6 about the Nazarite being separated unto the Lord.

- The reference to having power / authority on the head (1 Cor. 11:10) is definitely some reference back to the LXX of Num. 6:7 about the Nazarite.

What are we to make of all this? The point is perhaps that commitment to active missionary work is indeed a voluntary matter, as was the Nazarite vow. And that even although Paul was called to this, yet he responded to it by voluntarily binding himself to 'get the job done'. And the same is in essence true for us today in our various callings in the Lord's service.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-3Preaching_Of_Paul.htm

Pro 3

The world around us, especially through the medium of advertising, presents this world as the true Kingdom. If you buy this insurance policy, there will be true peace...if you smoke this cigarette, there will be a truly blessed life. We are pressurized more than we know to resign the true Kingdom for the fake one all around us. The wicked can even appear as the righteous, to the undiscerning. Thus the man who had such blessings that he needed to build bigger barns- for his barns overflowed- was experiencing apparently the blessings of the righteous (Prov. 3:32 NIV). But there is coming a time when the two worlds, the two Kingdoms, will experience their inevitable collision in the return of Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-6-4Worlds_In_Collision.htm

Lk. 17

The story of the slave who worked all day in the field and was then expected to come home and cook for his master without a word of thanks to him seems to be more realistic, lacking this element of unreality. But the Greek word "charis", usually translated "grace", is the one used for "thank" here (Lk. 17:9). The point is that we don't receive grace because of our going the extra mile, as we are inclined to think. We receive grace, but not as a result of all our special efforts; these are what are expected of us, on account of the fact that we have

become slaves to our Master, the Lord Jesus. At the end of all our special efforts (in whatever sphere), we must consciously make an effort to recognize that we are "unprofitable servants" (Lk. 17:10). This must surely connect with Mt. 25:30, which describes the rejected at the day of judgment as unprofitable servants. If we judge / condemn ourselves, we will not be condemned (1 Cor. 11:31). This is just one of many examples of where the Lord's parables seem intended to be linked with each other- which further proves that they are not stories with a deeper meaning, whose storyline is not intended to be carefully considered. We must recognize not only that we are unprofitable servants, but that we have only done what was our "duty" or debt to do- the implication being that we were sold into slavery on account of an unpayable debt. This is exactly the figure used by the Lord to describe us in Mt. 18:25.

But there is a telling detail in Lk. 17:10 which further reflects the grace of Jesus: "When ye shall have done (not 'when you do') all these things which are commanded you, (you will) say, We are unprofitable servants". It may be that this is taking us forward to the Kingdom; it is at the judgment that we 'do all' (Eph. 6:13), it is in the Kingdom that we will obey all the commandments (Ps. 119:6). This parable is a glimpse into the appreciation of grace we will have as we enter the Kingdom; once we are fully righteous, we will realize how unprofitable we are of ourselves (notice we may still feel in a sense "unprofitable" then). We will realize that all our service is only the repaying of the huge debt incurred by our sinfulness. Then, and perhaps only then, will we see works in their true perspective. This surely is the purpose of the judgment seat. We will walk away with the sense of wonder at the grace of Jesus that filled the one-hour workers as they walked away from the pay table with a day's wages.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-4The_Grace_Of_Jesus.htm

March 26 Num 7

The blood of Christ is personified as a voice that speaks to us, a better word than the voice of Abel's blood which cried out its message (Heb. 12:24 NIV; Gen. 4:10). This is after the pattern of how the commanding voice of Yahweh was heard above the blood sprinkled on "the atonement cover of the ark of the Testimony" (Num. 7:89 NIV). The ark was made of shittim wood- from a root meaning 'to flog, scourge or pierce', all replete with reference to the cross. And it was there on that wooden box that Yahweh was declared in the blood sprinkled upon it. Note how there is an association between the blood of atonement and the throne of judgment in 2 Sam. 6:2 and Is. 37:16, as if we see a foretaste of our judgment in the way we respond to the Lord's outpoured blood for us. The Lord Jesus in His time of death is the "propitiation", or rather 'the place of propitiation' for our sins, the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat...of all things which I will give thee in commandment" (Ex. 25:20-22). The blood of Christ is therefore to be associated with the commanding voice of God, such is the imperative within it. Our reflection on the cross today should speak God's voice to us.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Pro 4

David had taught his children with the words: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps. 34:11- did David say this to his children every evening?). And Solomon uses just the same words, even whilst disobeying God's law at the same time

in his own life: "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father...I give you good doctrine...for I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live" (Prov. 4:1-4). And so Solomon taught his kids with the same outward form of words, although the personal reality of wisdom was lost on him. How much of *our* spirituality is merely mouthing a form of words, living out parental expectation in some cases...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-4-2Solomon_And_David.htm

Lk. 18

" The Lord...is longsuffering to us-ward" of the last days. This longsuffering of Jesus suggests the parable of the persistent widow, whose continued requests should match our prayers for the second coming (the vengeance of our adversaries which she requested will only come then). " Though he bear long" (s.w. 'longsuffering') with us, " God shall avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him" (Lk. 18:7). The " us" whom Peter refers to as experiencing the Lord's longsuffering ('bearing long') are therefore to be equated with " the elect" in their fervent prayers for the second coming. The days being shortened- a strong idea in 2 Peter 3- for the elect's sake therefore refers to the hastening of the second coming on account of the elect's prayers (Mt. 24:22). In view of the later references to Matt. 24, it is not unreasonable to think that Peter is consciously alluding to Mt. 24:22 concerning the shortening of the days for the sake of the elect's prayers, through his allusion to the parable of the persistent widow of Lk.18:7.

Despite the power of prayer in bringing about the Lord's return in vengeance, Lk. 18:9-14 continues in this same context to warn that despite this:

- Perhaps the Lord won't find such faith in prayer when he returns
- Many will pray but be so sure of their own righteousness that their prayers are hindered
- The disciples will tend to despise the little ones in the ecclesia.

May we not give way to these latter day temptations!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/10.htm>

March 27 Num 8, 9

God intended Israel to be " a Kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6). "All the people of Israel" were the builders of the spiritual house of God, i.e. His people (Acts 4:10,11). All Israel were to lay their hands on the Levites to show that they were truly Israel's representatives (Num. 8:10). When Israel were rejected, they were told that they as a nation could no longer be God's priest (Hos. 4:6). We in the new Israel a're therefore all priests- a "royal priesthood". We're not to leave the duty of ministering to others- but to do it ourselves.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-2-1We%27re_All_Priests.htm

Pro 5

The two women of Proverbs both have surface similarities; folly parodies wisdom. Thus the words of the adulteress drip honey and oil (Prov. 5:3), just as those of wisdom do (Prov. 16:24). That which appears spiritual on the surface is often of the flesh. Thus we may kid ourselves that we're acting out of love in telling another person some dirt on another- when in fact, we're gossiping. Daily, hourly, we face these kinds of temptations.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-6-4Worlds_In_Collision.htm

Lk. 19

According to another of the parables of judgment in Lk. 19:23, the Lord will shew the unworthy how they could have entered the Kingdom. Again, notice how the judgment is for the education of those judged. He will shew them how they should have given their talent, the basic Gospel, to others, and therefore gained some interest. This has to be connected with the well known prohibition on lending money to fellow Israelites for usury; usury could only be received from Gentiles (Dt. 23:20). Surely the Lord is implying that at the least this person could have shared the Gospel with others, especially (in a Jewish context) the Gentile world. This would have at least brought some usury for the Lord. This would suggest that issues such as apathy in preaching, especially the unwillingness of the Jewish believers to share their hope with the Gentiles, will be raised by the Lord during the judgment process. Of course, the Lord hadn't told the servant (in the story) to lend the money to Gentiles; he was expected to use his initiative. The overall picture of the story is that at least the man should have done something! The Lord would even have accepted him if he lent money on usury, something which the Law condemned; if he'd have done something, even if it involved breaking some aspects of God's will... Instead, his attitude was that he had been given the talent of the Gospel, and he saw his duty as to just keep hold on it. He was angry that the Lord should even suggest he ought to have done anything else! We really must watch for this attitude in ourselves. He justifies himself by saying that he has "kept" the money (Lk. 19:20), using the word elsewhere used about the need to keep or hold on to the doctrines of the One Faith (1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:13; Rev. 6:9). He had done this, he had held on, he hadn't left the faith. And he thought this was enough to bring him to the Kingdom. Sadly, our view of spirituality has almost glorified this very attitude. Any who show initiative have been seen as mavericks, as likely to go wrong. The emphasis has been on holding on to basic doctrine, marking your Bible with it, attending weekly meetings about it (even if you snooze through them), regularly attending...And, son, you won't go far wrong. The Lord, in designing this parable as He did, had exactly this sort of complacency in mind.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-8Parables_Of_Judgment.htm

March 28 Num 10

The Old Testament use of 'trumpet' language relates to the following ideas:

- To prepare for war
- To indicate the need to move on
- Convicting others of sin (Is. 58:1; Jer. 4:19)
- Warning of invaders (Ez. 33:3-6)

- A proclamation of the urgency to prepare for the day of the Lord (Joel 2:1)
- The certainty of salvation and God's response to prayer: " Ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God (Old Testament idiom for 'your prayers will be answered'), and ye shall be saved" (Num. 10:9).

All of these elements ought to feature in the work of our twenty first century priests. How much conviction of sin, blunt warning, forward moving inspiration, confidence building, real meaningful emphasis on the power of prayer, eager anticipation of the second coming, above all what sense of urgency in spiritual development- do you contribute, do you offer, do you have pouring from you? For we are each one members of a royal, trumpet-blowing priesthood.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-1-3Trumpet_Sounding_Priests.htm

Pro 6

The blindness of Solomon is driven home time and again. He warned the typical young man about being captivated by the eyelids of the Gentile woman (Prov. 6:25); yet it was the eyes of Miss Egypt that he openly admitted stole his heart (Song 4:9; 6:5). The strange woman has words like a honeycomb (Prov. 5:3); and yet this is exactly how Solomon found his woman's words (Song 4:11). The wicked Gentile woman is associated with a large house in a high place, in the temple area (e.g. Prov. 9:14). But this is exactly where Solomon built his Egyptian wife a house! The Proverbs which lament the rich man who has bitterness in his family life no doubt came true of Solomon in later life (e.g. 15:17). A whole string of passages in Proverbs warn of the " strange" woman (2:16; 5:20; 6:24; 7:5; 20:16; 23:27; 27:13). Yet the very same word (translated " outlandish") is used in Neh. 13 concerning the women Solomon married. The antidote to succumbing to the wicked woman was to have wisdom- according to Proverbs. And Solomon apparently had wisdom. Yet he succumbed to the wicked woman. The reason for this must be that Solomon didn't really have wisdom. Yet we know that he was given it in abundance. The resolution of this seems to be that Solomon asked for wisdom in order to lead Israel rather than for himself, he used that wisdom to judge Israel and to educate the surrounding nations. But none of it percolated to himself. As custodians of true doctrine- for that is what we are- we are likely to suffer from over familiarity with it. We can become so accustomed to 'handling' it, as we strengthen each other, as we preach, that the personal bearing of the Truth becomes totally lost upon us, as it was totally lost upon Solomon. Thus Solomon exhorted others to keep the law of their mother (Prov. 6:21), so that it would keep them from the attractive Gentile girl. And don't think, he went on, that in this context you can take fire into your hands and not be burnt. You can't play around with your own sexuality without it having a permanent spiritual effect upon you (6:27). But dear Bathsheba's words to Solomon warning against the Gentile woman were completely forgotten by him.

Truth flowed through his mouth with ease, but took no lodgement at all in his heart. Truth, absolute and pure, flows through our hands in such volume. Bible study after Bible study, chapter after chapter... But does it mean anything at all to us? Prov. 6:26 warns the young man that the Gentile woman will take his money and leave him destitute at the end. These words seem to be alluded to by Solomon years later in Ecc. 6:2, where he laments that despite his wealth and success, a Gentile would have it all after his death. He saw in later life that his warnings to the young men of Israel had been in the form of painting a picture of a typical

young man who epitomized youthful folly; but now he saw that he had been making a detailed prophecy of himself.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-4Sin_Never_Satisfies.htm

Lk. 20

The Lord's initial Palestinian hearers were well used to the scenario of absentee landlords. The parables of Israel would have been easily understood by them. The landlords lived far away, were never seen, and sometimes their workers took over the whole show for themselves. The Lord's parable of the absentee landlord in Lk. 20:9-16 alludes to this situation. He sends messengers seeking fruit from the vineyard, but the tenants abuse or kill them, and he does nothing. When his son shows up, they assume that he's going to do just as before- ignore whatever they do to him. After all, they'd got away with not giving him any fruit and ignoring his messengers for so long, why would he change his attitude? He was so far away, he'd been in a "far country" for a very long time (Lk. 20:9), they didn't really know him. The Lord asked the question: "What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?" (Lk. 20:15). The obvious answer, from the context provided within the story, would be: "Judging on past experience, not much at all". But then the Lord presented the element of unreality in the story, as a sudden, biting trick of the tail: No, the lord of the vineyard would actually personally come and destroy them, and give the vineyard to other tenants. Even though his experience of having tenants farm his land had been a fruitless and painful experience that had cost him the life of his son. And it was that element of unreality that brings home to us the whole point of the story. The Father does appear distant and unresponsive to our selfishness, our rebellion, and our refusal to hear his servants the prophets. But there is a real judgment to come, in which He will personally be involved. And yet even His destruction of the Jewish tenants hasn't taken away His almost manic desire to have workers, in His desperate desire for true spiritual fruit. The parables of Israel surely speak encouragement to each of us.

The parable of the absentee landlord has a telling twist to it. Absentee landlords who had never visited their land for ages, and found the people they sent to the property beaten up, would usually just forget it. They wouldn't bother. In the parable which draws on this, the Lord asks what the landlord will do (Lk. 20:15). The expected answer was: 'Not much. He got what he could, he was never bothered to go there for years anyway'. But this landlord is odd. He keeps on sending messengers when any other landlord would have given up or got mad earlier on. But God's patience through the prophets was likewise unusual. And then, when the tenants thought they must surely be able to get away with it because the Lord seemed so distant and out of touch... He suddenly comes Himself in person and destroys them. He doesn't hire a bunch of people to do it. He comes in person, as the Lord will in judgment. And instead of deciding he'd had his fingers burnt and giving up vineyards as a bad job, this Lord gives the vineyard to others- He tries again. And so the Lord is doing with the Gentiles.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a1-7Parables_Of_Israel.htm

March 29 Num 11

The illogicality of Israel's rejection of Moses when he first appeared to them is so apparent. They were slaves in Egypt, and then one of the most senior of Pharaoh's officials reveals that he is their brother, and has been sent by God to deliver them. Yet they preferred the life of slavery in Egypt. This same illogicality is seen in us if we refuse baptism, preferring to stay in the world of slavery, or later when we chose the world as opposed to Christ. We deny, we refuse, we reject, the Lord who bought us by going back to the world from which he redeemed us. The illogicality of going back to the world is brought out by the illogicality of Israel's rejection of Moses. Israel rejected Moses because it was easier to stay where they were. Such is the strength of conservatism in human nature; such is our innate weakness of will and resolve. They rejected the idea of leaving Egypt because they thought it was better than it was, they failed to face up to how much they were suffering (Num. 11:5). And our apathy in responding to Christ's redemptive plan for us is rooted in the same problem; we fail to appreciate the seriousness of sin, the extent to which we are in slavery to sin- even though the evidence for this is all around us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-4Moses_As_A_Type_Of_Christ.htm

Pro 7

Solomon wrote Prov. 7 shortly after his marriage to a Gentile; how ever could he do it? Clearly he was spiritually blind to a fundamental part of his life, but the fact he was blind never seems to have occurred to him. How can we think that we are not blind? Remember how the disciples were blind to the most obvious teaching of the Lord Jesus: that he would die and rise again. Israel likewise were blind to the prophecies of a suffering Messiah; the early Jewish Christians were blind to the mass of Old and New Testament evidence that circumcision, Sabbath keeping etc. were irrelevant to salvation. In retrospect it all looks so obvious. There may very well be aspects of our lives which are fundamentally astray, which could even lead to our condemnation. " Search us, O God, and know each heart" .

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-4Sin_Never_Satisfies.htm

Lk. 21

Lk. 21:13 speaks of how when a believer is persecuted, "it shall turn to you for a testimony". What does this really mean? For me, the most satisfactory explanation would be that the Angels give a positive testimony of the faithful believer in the court of Heaven. Our Angels speak about us to God!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

March 30 Num 12, 13

The man Moses was made very meek, until he was the meekest man alive on earth (Num. 12:3 Heb.). "A stuttering shepherd, shy of leadership and haunted by his crime of passion" in slaying the Egyptian...these things developed this in him. Remember that Moses himself wrote Num. 12:3. It's an autobiographical comment, reflecting of course the Spirit of Him who knows every heart, and could make such a statement. And yet he writes it in recording how God had rebuked Aaron and Miriam for criticizing him, and how He had told them that He spoke with Moses alone face to face. We can imagine Moses blushing, with hung head.

And then he makes the comment, that he was made the most humble man... Appreciating the honour of seeing so much of God, when he himself was a sinner, was part of that humbling process. All Israel will ultimately go through this when they face up to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Is. 2:10,11). This certainly reads like an allusion to Moses' cowering in the rock, humbling himself in the dust, before the glory of Yahweh. Our glimpses of the wonder of the Father's character should have the same effect upon us, just beholding the glory of God, i.e. the manifestation of His perfect character is Christ, should change us into the same image (2 Cor. 3:18- another invitation to see ourselves as Moses).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-1-1Moses_Our_Example.htm

Pro 8, 9

His father's high parental expectation of him led him to self-assurance, arrogance, an assumption he was right and could never be wrong. And one sees this in many a Christian family. This self-assurance of Solomon's was reflected in how he brought up his children. He spoke of his law as giving life and blessing, appropriating the very terms of Deuteronomy about the blessings of obedience to God's law. Wisdom said: "Now therefore my sons, hearken unto me: for blessed are they that keep my ways" (Prov. 8:32 RV). Yet these are the very words Solomon uses when talking to his kids: "Now therefore my sons, hearken unto me" (Prov. 5:7; 7:24). Conclusion? Solomon sees the woman "Wisdom" as a personification of himself. It was really Solomon's self-justification. He personally was wisdom, so he thought. This is how self-exalted his possession of true wisdom made him. And of course, his kids didn't listen to wisdom's way. In passing, I have noted that those raised 'in the truth' often find it very hard to take criticism in later life. They find tolerance of others' views hard; they perceive themselves to be right to an intolerant extent. Is this not a little bit of the Solomon syndrome?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-3Solomons_Self_Justification.htm

Lk. 22

It is where two or three are gathered together in His Name, that the Lord Jesus is somehow there in the midst of them (Mt. 18:20). Perhaps this means that He is especially manifested / revealed in the gathered together groups of believers, in a special and far different way to which an isolated believer reading a Bible may know the presence of Jesus. All this must especially be true of the breaking of bread- the only other time in the New Testament we meet the three Greek words translated "I am in the midst" is in Lk. 22:27, where the Lord comments how He is in the midst of the disciples at the first breaking of bread. Of course, mere church attendance doesn't mean we perceive Christ there, in the midst of us; we perceive Him there insofar as we perceive the spirit of Christ in our brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

March 31 Num 14

Num. 14:20 records how the Father forgave Israel according to Moses' word. And in just as real a sense, He has placed the reconciliation of this world in the hands of our ministry. The salvation of others in some sense depends upon us, a third party, as it were.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-3power_of_preaching.htm

Pro 10

Understanding leads to obedience, but the very practicing of God's ways grants us yet more understanding into those commands we are obeying: "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" in practical, daily life (Ps. 119:99,100). The commandments of God in that sense "help" us (Ps. 119:175 RV). "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright" (Prov. 10:29). This ought to be somewhat disturbing for our community, who can truly say that they have a better understanding of God's word (at least technically) than anyone else. This, according to what David says, should result in a deeply empowered way of life, which in turn should drive us to yet deeper understanding. One fears that we are left knowing but not 'understanding' in the experiential sense of which David speaks.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/1-5importance_of_doctrine.htm

Lk. 23

The place of crucifixion was so public- it was near a road, for passers by spoke to the crucified Jesus (Mk. 15:29), and Simon was a passerby coming in from the field (Gk. *agros*, Lk. 23:26). The cross confronted people in their daily living, just as it should us today. Quintillian (Declamations 274) records how crucifixions were always held in the most public places where crowds would gather. For us, if we are living the crucified life with Jesus, it cannot be done in a corner. Crucifixion is by its very nature a public event. There was once a doctor in Paraguay who spoke out against human rights abuses. Local police took their revenge by torturing his teenage son to death. The local people wanted to stage a huge protest march, but the father disallowed them and chose another means of protest. At the funeral, the father displayed his son's body as it was when retrieved from jail- naked, scarred from electric shocks, cigarette burns and beatings. And the body was displayed not in a coffin but on the blood-soaked prison mattress. This public display of a body was the most powerful witness and incitement possible. And the public nature of the display of God's tortured son was for the same basic reason.

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April Readings

April 1

Num. 15

The fact that he is condemned for having "despised the commandment of the Lord" (1 Sam. 12:9) in David's sin with Bathsheba indicates that He knew all along what God's will really was. The fact that the flesh took over does not in any way mitigate his responsibility in this. This is a direct quote from the Law's definition of the sin of presumption: "The soul that

doeth ought presumptuously...because he hath despised the word of the Lord...that soul shall utterly be cut off" (Num.. 15:30,31). Knowing David's emotional nature and also the fact that he did not completely turn away from God afterwards, we would have expected a quicker repentance if it had been a passing sin of passion. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that the sin was of presumption rather than passion. In his prosperity he had said I shall never be moved and he was determined that he couldn't be (Ps. 30:6). Hearing those words from Nathan must have struck real fear into David- he was being incriminated for the supreme sin of presumption, for which there was no provision of sacrifice or repentance. It is a mark of his faith and knowledge of God as the God of love, that He is willing to go on to confess his sin, in the hope of forgiveness. "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it" (Ps. 51:16) was spoken by David more concerning this sin of presumption for which there was no sacrifice prescribed, rather than about the actual sin of adultery. However, we must not get the impression that David was a hard, callous man. Everything we know about him points to him being a big hearted, warm softie. David's sin with Bathsheba was in that sense out of character. Yet such is the stranglehold of sin that even he was forced to act with such uncharacteristic callousness and indifference to both God and man in order to try to cover his sin.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-3Davids_Sin_With_Bathsheba.htm

Prov. 11

We too can be a tree of life to those with whom we live; we can win their souls for the Kingdom (Prov. 11:30). The Thessalonians would be accepted in the final glory of judgment day simply because our testimony among you was believed (2 Thess. 1:10). Eve, taken out of the wounded side of the first man, was a type of the ecclesia; and her name means source of life, in anticipation of how the church would bring life to the world. We really can lead a person to eternity! So we should make absolutely every effort to do so.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-3power_of_preaching.htm

Lk. 24

Reading Luke and Acts through together, it becomes apparent that the author [Luke] saw the acts of the apostles as a continuation of those of the Lord Jesus. This is why he begins Acts by talking about his "former treatise" of all that Jesus had *begun* to do, implying that He had continued His doings through the doings of the apostles. Luke clearly saw the early ecclesia as preaching the same message as Jesus and the apostles; they continued what was essentially a shared witness. This means that we too are to see in the Lord and the 12 as they walked around Galilee the basis for our witness; we are continuing their work, with just the same message and range of responses to it. Lk. 24:47 concludes the Gospel with the command to go and preach remission of sins, continuing the work of the Lord Himself, who began His ministry with the proclamation of remission (Lk. 4:18 cp. 1:77).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-24.htm>

April 2

Num. 16

The NT not only encourages us to all be priests; but we can even aspire to the High Priesthood, in a certain sense. James 5:16 speaks of the need to pray for one another, that we may be healed. This is an undoubted allusion back to mighty Moses praying for smitten Miriam, and to Aaron staying the plague by his offering of incense / prayer (Num.. 16:47). Surely James is saying that every one of us can rise up to the level of High Priest in this sense. Under the Law, the provision for Nazariteship encouraged the average Israelite to enter into the spirit of the High Priest by imposing some of the regulations governing his behaviour upon them. All Israel were bidden make fringes of blue, in conscious imitation of the High Priest to whose spirit they all were intended to attain (Num.. 15:38).

Prov. 12

God confirms men in the path they chose to tread. The very experience of sin confirms sinners in that way: the way of the wicked seduceth them(Prov. 12:26). The more men sin, the more sin God counts to them, even if they may not have actually committed it. This is why we can't let up our guard and think that well, it's only a little sin, just once& .

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-11The_Downward_Spiral.html

Gal. 1, 2

Paul's attitude to his brethren seems to have changed markedly over the years. He begins as being somewhat detached from them; perhaps as all new converts are initially. We see the Truth for what it is, we realize we had to make the commitment we did, and we are happy to do our own bit in preaching the Truth. But often a real concern and care for our brethren takes years to develop. Paul seems to tell the Galatians that the Gospel he preached had not been given to him by men, because in the early days after his conversion he was rather indifferent towards other Christian believers; " (Paul) conferred not with flesh and blood" after his conversion, neither did he go to see the apostles in Jerusalem to discuss how to preach to Israel; instead, Paul says, he pushed off to Arabia for three years in isolation. He was unknown by face to the Judaeans, and even after his return from Arabia, he made no special effort to meet up with the Apostles (Gal. 1). The early Paul comes over as self-motivated, a maverick, all too ready to fall out with Barnabas, all too critical of Mark for failing to rise up to Paul's level of fearless devotion (Acts 15:39). And yet he grew over time to appreciate his need for commitment to his brethren; and it's a path we all follow as our discipleship progresses.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-2-1paul_and_his_brethren.htm

April 3

Num. 17,18

The command that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel is referring back to how the priests had no material inheritance but lived off the sacrifices (Num.. 18:11). And for us, the honour and wonder of preaching Christ should mean that we keep a loose hold on the material things of this life. And as we are all priests, we are all preachers.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

Prov. 13

Solomon saw himself as the Messianic King and therefore infallible. He again and again failed to realize the conditionality of all God has promised. His own words were so true of him: There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing [quoted in Rev. 3:17 about the rejected]: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth(Prov. 13:7). This last phrase is quoted about the Lord Jesus, who made Himself poor on the cross. And yet Solomon, who made himself rich, was the very anti-Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-3Solomons_Self_Justification.htm

Gal. 3, 4

In Jn. 18:37 Jesus told Pilate in the context of His upcoming death that He had come into this world to bear witness to the truth- the cross was the supreme witness and exhibition of the truth. There was no doctrine preached there, but rather the way of life which those doctrines ultimately lead to. Gal. 3:1 remonstrates with the Galatians as to how they could not obey the truth when the crucified Christ had been so clearly displayed to them; clearly Paul saw obedience to the truth as obedience to the implications of the cross. There is a powerful parallel in Gal. 4:16: I am your enemy because I tell you the truth... you are enemies of the cross of Christ. Thus the parallel is made between the cross and the truth. We are sanctified by the truth (Jn. 17:19); but our sanctification is through cleansing in the Lord's blood. The same word is used of our sanctification through that blood (Heb. 9:13; 10:29; 13:12). Perhaps this is why Dan. 8:11,12 seems to describe the altar as the truth. The cross of Jesus is the ultimate truth. There we see humanity for what we really are; there we see the real effect of sin. Yet above all, there we see the glorious reality of the fact that a Man with our nature overcame sin, and through His sacrifice we really can be forgiven the untruth of all our sin; and thus have a real, concrete, definite hope of the life eternal.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/alcohol/alcohol_b4.htm

April 4

Num. 19

The "water of separation" granted cleansing, in prophecy of the effect of the blood of Christ (Num.. 19:21). But the Hebrew for "separation" is also translated uncleanness (Lev. 20:21; Ezra 9:11; Zech. 13:1). Touching this water for any other reason made a man unclean. Only if used in the right context did it make him clean (Num.. 19:21). This is why it is described with a word which has these two meanings. Thus the RSV gives "water of impurity", the Russian, following an LXX manuscript: "water of purifying". And so it is with our contact with the work of the Lord, symbolized in the emblems. We are made unclean by it, we drink damnation to ourselves, if we don't discern it. Only if we properly discern it are we cleansed by it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-4breaking_of_bread_and_judgment.htm

Prov. 14

he utter *folly* of the rejected is a major theme (Prov. 14:8,18; Ps. 5:5; 49:13; Mt. 7:26; 25:8). Israel wandering in the wilderness until their carcasses lay strewn over the scrubland of Sinai connects with Cain also being a wanderer after his rejection. He was made a "fugitive", from a Hebrew root meaning to shake, to totter, to reel. He was to wander, shaking with fear, reeling. The word is also rendered 'to bemoan'. It's an awful scene: bemoaning his lot, shaking, wandering, reeling, nowhere. The same image is found in Prov. 14:32: The wicked is driven away [Heb. to totter, be chased] in his wickedness. And yet is this how Cain literally lived? Apparently not, for he married and built a city. He went through all the normal human functions, but in his soul, he was shaking, reeling, tottering, bemoaning his lot. And so it will be for the rejected. Jude matches this with "*wandering* stars, unto whom is reserved the blackness of darkness" (v.13). It does us good to think of the reality of rejection; that our destiny is only one of two possible outcomes. It helps us be the more grateful that we have been saved from wrath and condemnation through Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_7.htm

Gal. 5, 6

To this extent does the preacher manifest his Lord, to the extent that Paul's preaching amongst the Galatians was a placarding forth of Christ crucified (Gal. 3:1 Gk.). God was pleased to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him (Gal. 1:16). And thus Paul could conclude in Gal. 6:17 by saying that he bore in his body [perhaps an idiom for his life, cp. the broken body of the Lord we remember] the stigmata of the Lord Jesus. He was so clearly a slave belonging to the Lord Jesus that it was as if one could see the marks of the nails in his body. Preaching is a revealing to men of the Christ that is within us; this is what witnessing in Christ is really about, rather than pushing bills or placing press adverts or writing letters. Not that any of these things are to be decried, but the essence is that we from deep within ourselves reveal Christ to men. This is why those who witness to Him, as only those in Him can, testify to His especial presence in this work. The promise that I am with you always was in the context of being near the preacher as he or she witnesses.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-2Witnessing_For_Christ.html
April 5

Num. 20, 21

Moses is one of the greatest types of the Lord Jesus, in whom the Father was supremely manifested. Because of this, it is fitting that we should see a very high level of God's manifestation in Moses. Indeed it seems that God was manifest in Moses to a greater degree than in any other Old Testament character. Israel chode with Moses...they strove with the Lord (Num. 20:3,13) uses the same Hebrew word for both chode and strove. To strive with Moses was to strive with the Lord- i.e. with the guardian Angel that was so closely associated with Moses? Num. 20:4 continues rather strangely with the Israelites addressing Moses in the plural: The people chode with Moses, saying... Why have ye [you plural] brought up... . Could it be that even they recognized his partnership with God? Likewise Num. 21:5: And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye [plural] brought us up out of Egypt to die? . This amazing partnership between God and a man is replicable in *our* lives too!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-8-1God_Manifestation_In_Moses.htm

Prov. 15

There should be an element of preparation before offering prayer, as there was before offering a sacrifice. Note how Prov. 15:8 parallels sacrifice with prayer. Prayer ought to be a humbling experience, perhaps alluded to by the incense, representing prayer, needing to be "beaten small". Preparation of prayer involves humility. David takes words of supplication to himself, which as King he must often have heard from desperate citizens, and uses it in his own prayers to God: "Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call... A Psalm of David" (Ps. 20:9). In this one sees a conscious humility in how David formulated his prayers.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-9how_to_improve_prayer.htm

Eph 1, 2

At our baptism we became "in Christ". Through that act we obeyed all the Lord's invitations to believe "in Him", or as the Greek means, to believe into Him. We believed into Him after we heard the Gospel, by baptism (Eph. 1:13). We are now connected with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; we are treated by God as if we are His Son. His supreme righteousness is counted to us; we have a part in His redemption and salvation, because we are in Him (Rom. 3:24). In God's eyes, we became newly created people, because we were in Christ by baptism (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 1:16,17). He made in Himself a new man (Eph. 2:15). But do we appreciate what it means to be "in Christ" as well as we might? The richness of His character, the wisdom and knowledge of the Father that is in Him, is there for our eternal discovery (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:27; 2:3). We were baptized into His death; He had a cup to drink of (His death) and a baptism to be baptized with (His burial) which we now become united with (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:10-12). As such great attention was focused upon that suffering Son in His death, as such lavish, almost senseless extravagance of care for His burial: all of this becomes lavished on us as we become in Him. All that is true of Him becomes in some way true of us; as He is the seed of Abraham, so we become; and so the list could go on.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-1What_It_Means_To_Be_In_Christ.html

April 6

Num. 22, 23

Balaam was one of God's prophets. Balak, an enemy of Israel asked him to curse Israel, in return for money. Balaam really wanted to curse Israel and get the reward, but God wouldn't let him. Balak sent a messenger to ask Balaam to come to him. Balaam asked God whether he should go. The answer was that he should not go. Then the messenger came again; and this time, God told Balaam to go with them, but only to speak God's word. It was as if God was pushing Balaam down the road to spiritual ruin. The end result of Balaam meeting Balak was that he advised Balak to make Israel sin with his women, which would mean that God would curse Israel. And for this Balaam was condemned. If Balaam had not gone with the messengers in the first place, he would not have fallen into this sin. But God told him to go with them (Num.. 22:20). And if we chose to be weak, then God can confirm us in our weakness, pushing us into a downward spiral.

Prov. 16

Solomon came to see himself as somehow more than human. Consider his comment that "the wrath of a king is as angels of death" (Prov. 16:14). As God sends out angels of death, as on Passover night, it's a reflection of His decision as King in the court of Heaven. But Solomon decided that his court was as God's court, and therefore his thoughts, emotions and decisions would therefore be somehow Divinely fulfilled, with Angels sent out to fulfill them. He took 'God manifestation' to such a degree that he denied his own humanity, and this destroyed his own person. We see it happening all around us- church pastors, visual artists who think somehow God is speaking through them to the point they see themselves as "Gods in their own right" [as Dali and Picasso have been described as seeing themselves], Kings and political leaders and corporate directors and office managers and working class husbands and obsessive, domineering single mums... who all somehow come to see themselves as little gods with a 'Divine right' to infallible decision making for others.

Solomon writes inspired truth in Proverbs of course, but it is inevitable that much of what he writes about the need to respect the man who has wisdom, and his superiority over all others, was written with an eye to his own self-justification. He even writes as if the king must be accepted as automatically infallible: A divine sentence is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment& the fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul (Prov. 16:10; 20:2). It was really Solomon's self-justification.

Often Solomon's Proverbs bring out the tension between wealth and wisdom, and the need to choose wisdom (Prov. 8:11; 16:16). But whilst he was inspired to write this, and true as it all was, it is inevitable that Solomon said all this with his mind on the way that he had rejected wealth for wisdom when asked by God for his wish. He thought that his right choice in early life [cp. Christian baptism] justified him in later loving wealth rather than wisdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-3Solomons_Self_Justification.htm

Eph 3, 4

The Lord had prophesied that His followers over time shall become one flock (Jn. 10:16 RV); they would be perfected into one, that the world may know (Jn. 17:23 RV). He surely hoped this would have become true in the first century. And it could have been like this in the first century- for Eph. 3:9 speaks of how the unity of Jew and Gentile would make all men see the Gospel. This is the urgency of Paul's appeal for unity in Ephesians- he knew that their unity was the intended witness to the world which the Lord had spoken of as the means of the fulfilment of the great commission in Jn. 17:21-23. But sadly, Jew and Gentile went their separate ways in the early church, unity in the church broke up, and the possibility of world-converting witness evaporated. Seeing the great commission is to be powerfully obeyed in our last days, we simply *must* learn the lesson.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-3-4Unity_In_The_Church.htm

April 7

Num. 24, 25

Balaam's eyes were opened to the Angel blocking his way, and when he realized how he had closed his spiritual vision to the Angel trying to stop him going to Balak, he fell down on his face (Num.. 22:31). But when he is later given a vision of Balak's judgment, the vision which

Balaam didn't want to see, he describes himself as the man whose eye was closed and yet had to see the vision with his eyes open (Num. 24:3,4 RV). He didn't learn the lesson. He closed his eyes so as not to see the vision, and yet God forced him to open his eyes and see it. And again, he fell down upon his face (Num. 24:4,16 RV), as he had when the Angel blocked his path earlier. He wouldn't learn his lesson, he wouldn't perceive how circumstances were being repeated in God's desperate effort to get him to repent.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-2-1Repetition_In_Biblical_Narratives.htm

Prov. 17

Gossip is part of a downward spiral of spirituality. Once gossip starts a quarrel, it's like water bursting out of a dam; soon the whole land of Israel will be flooded (Prov. 17:14 NIV). So it's best not to start it, not only for our own sakes, but because of the effect it will have on the rest of the body. Peter likewise points an antithesis between gossiping and receiving "the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1,2). Real spiritual growth is impossible if we are taken up with gossiping; and this is true on the communal as well as individual level.

Prov. 17:9 says that seeking love by covering a transgression is the opposite of repeating a matter. Think through this. It implies that we gossip, i.e. we repeat others' sins, because we chose not to cover their sin by forgiving it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-4-1Gossip_In_The_Church.htm

Eph 5, 6

Paul's argument in Eph. 5 is quite clear: the man represents Christ, and the woman represents the ecclesia. But have a look down at 5:30: "We (all of us) are members of (Christ's) body, of his flesh, and of his bones". That the church *is* the body of Christ is a common New Testament theme. The figure of *being* somebody's body could not be more intense and personal. You touch your own body, feel your bones beneath your flesh- that's fundamentally *you*. Whilst of course Christ does have a separate bodily existence, we are fundamentally Christ. Without us and our inherent sinfulness, Christ would not have come into existence, nor would He now exist.

So, the man represents Christ, and the woman the ecclesia. But the ecclesia, all of it, *is* the body of Christ; so in this sense husbands should love their wives "as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (5:28,29). The more we appreciate the strength and power of typology, the more we will realize the spiritual unity which there should be between brethren and sisters. The physical body of Christ is not divided- there is only one Jesus in Heaven. If brethren represent Christ and sisters typify His body, then there should be no division- either between husbands and wives, or amongst brethren and sisters within Christ's body. Thus marriage breakdowns and internal ecclesial strife are equally wrong- they both spoil the typology presented in Eph. 5. They effectively tear Christ's body apart, as men tried to do on the cross. We say "tried to" because ultimately Christ's body is indivisible- in the same way as in a sense His body was "broken" (as it is by division in the body), whilst in another sense it remained unbroken, in God's sight. Likewise, the ecclesial body in God's sight is even now not divided- we are one in Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-4One_In_Christ.htm

April 8

Num. 26

There is reason to think that over time, the perception of the promises by the body of believers has moved from the physical to the spiritual. Thus the early Israelites thought of the promised inheritance as being effectively fulfilled in the fact that they had entered Canaan and were living there (Lev. 25:46; Num. 26:55; Dt. 1:28; 12:10; Josh. 14:1). David went on to realize that the promised inheritance was not in this life, but looked forward to the day when God's people would eternally inherit Canaan through the gift of immortality (Ps. 25:13; 37:9,11; 69:36). Solomon went further, in that he spoke of the promised inheritance as the glory (Prov. 3:35), depth of knowledge (Prov. 14:18) and spiritual riches (Prov. 8:21; 28:10) which God's people will inherit in the future Kingdom. The Lord Jesus rarely spoke of the inheritance as inheriting land, but rather of inheriting "everlasting life" (Mt. 19:29), the Kingdom (Mt. 25:34), "all things" (Rev. 21:7). Likewise the NT writers saw the "inheritance" as forgiveness (Acts 3:25,26; 1 Pet. 3:9) and salvation (Heb. 1:14). These more abstract things will all be experienced in the land promised to Abraham; this is the unchangeable, literal basis of all the other blessings.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-4-1Jacob_And_The_Promises.htm

Prov. 18

Our Community has many strong points, and many indications of real spiritual growth. But there are some practical areas to which we have all paid insufficient attention. One of these is the terrible human tendency to repeat rumour, to draw unsupported conclusions, and to get disaffected with others until we imagine untrue things about them which we then state to others. I am not innocent in this area. And neither are any of us (not that this fact in any way comforts me). Let's not pretend that any of us don't gossip. And let's admit that our ears *love* to hear gossip. "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's innermost parts" (Prov. 18:8 NIV), i.e. we dwell on what we hear very deeply. This is one reason to interrupt a gossiping brother or sister before they go further; for the words of gossip will go deep down within us, and we will ruminate on them. *Gossip in the church is, sadly, becoming a real sin amongst us.* If a community becomes full of gossip, allegation and counter-claims, very soon we will destroy ourselves.

As gossip in the church spreads, it becomes distorted, sometimes horrendously. The result is that when the victim hears it, they inevitably become angry, and often feel that they cannot associate with their brethren and sisters if such things are thought about them. They are ashamed, angry because what was said was untrue, and they are tempted to become vindictive against those whom they hold to be responsible. In extreme cases, this can lead to resignation from the community. An offended brother is harder to be won back than a fortified city (Prov. 18:19). Over the past year as you read this, *this will have happened.* But often the result is simply a decreased enthusiasm to attend the meetings, to break close contact with the brethren and sisters who ought to be our true friends. This results in a community which is cold and untrusting of each other, with every one of us internalizing our struggles, appearing righteous on the surface but never opening our hearts. *And this also is*

happening amongst us. For all concerned, the process of gossip and counter-claiming all saps real spirituality out of us. We have enough wonderful things to contemplate: the supremacy of the love of Christ, far above our human knowledge; the sublime intricacy of God's word and character; the fulfilment of prophecy; the wonder of our Hope. These things ought to fill our thinking- and our conversation with each other. If they don't, and gossip in the church becomes the main diet of our conversation, *something is very seriously wrong with us.* We only have a few years *at most* (probably far less) to sort ourselves out before we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We need to be using every moment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-4-1Gossip_In_The_Church.htm

Phi 1, 2

The early church are held up as our example in Phil. 1:27: " Stand fast in *one spirit, with one mind* striving together for the faith of the Gospel" . Doesn't that sound just like an allusion to the early ecclesia? Now go on to 2:2: " Be likeminded, having the same love, being *of one accord, of one mind*" . There's that phrase " one accord" again. It's hardly used outside the Acts, so we should read that like a signpost, saying 'Go back to the Acts!'. So Paul is saying: 'You believers must always remember the great spirit of " one accord" in the early ecclesia in Jerusalem. Let the early church be your example!'. And if you look closely, you'll see a number of other allusions back to the early chapters of Acts. For example, v.4: " Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" . Twice we read there in Acts of disregarding our own " things" . Paul definitely has his eye on Acts 4:32: " The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul (just as Paul spoke about in Phil.2:2): neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own (cp. " his own things" in Phil.2:4); but they had all things common" . And then in v.3 Paul warns against doing things " through vainglory" . Doesn't that sound like an allusion to Ananias and Sapphira? Then he warns them in v.14 " Do all things without murmurings and disputings" . It can't be coincidental that in Acts 6:1,9 we read twice about there being murmurings and disputings in the early ecclesia. Phil. 2 describes the exaltation of Christ on his resurrection. It seems no accident that this is then described in the very words which the apostles so often used in their preaching in the early chapters of Acts. Thus in v.9, " God hath highly exalted him" is a reference to Peters words: " Being by the right hand of God exalted ...him hath God exalted" (Acts 2:33; 5:33). The whole theme in Phil.2 is of Christ suffering on the cross and then being exalted by the Father, and given the mighty Name. The very same language is used so often in Acts (2:9-11=Acts 2:36; 2:10= Acts 4:10; 3:6,16).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-2Early_Church_Our_Example.htm

April 9

Num. 27

Joshua is to be seen as really our example. Num.. 27:20 LXX says that Moses put or gave of his glory upon Joshua- and this passage is alluded to by the Lord in Jn. 17:22: The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them. Note that the Lords prayer of John 17 is full of allusion to Moses, as detailed in <http://www.carelinks.net/books/dh/bl/4->

4Moses_As_A_Type_Of_Christ.htm. So the disciples, indeed all those for whom the Lord prayed in His prayer, are to see themselves as Joshua. Further, in the same context, the Lord washed the disciples' feet. This would've been understood by the disciples as an allusion to a well known Jewish legend that in Num. 27:15-23, Moses acted as a servant to Joshua by preparing a basin of water and washing Joshua's feet(1). And the LXX of Moses' final charge to Joshua in Dt. 31:7,8 [fear not, neither be dismayed] is quoted by the Lord to His disciples in Jn. 14:1,27.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-9-4Joshua_Our_Example.htm

Prov. 19

Being generous to the poor is likened by Prov. 19:17 to lending to the Lord; and He will repay that 'debt'. There are countless ways in which God's word could tell us that what we give to the poor, we will somehow receive back from God. But God chooses to use this figure- thus indicating His own solidarity with the very lowest of society, and how God feels in the debt of those who are for them. It's of course only a figure, but God surely shows His humility by using it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Phi 3, 4

Our reward in the Kingdom will in some way be related to the work of upbuilding we have done with our brethren and sisters in this life. The "reward" which 1 Cor. 3:14 speaks of is the "work" we have built in God's ecclesia in this life. In agreement with this, Paul describes those he had laboured for as the reward he would receive in the Kingdom (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19). Relationships in the Kingdom of God were to be his reward. This not only demonstrates the impossibility of attaining the "reward" if we ignore the brotherhood; it also shows that the Kingdom will mean something different for each of us; the "reward" we will be given will be a reflection of our own personal labours for our brethren in ecclesial life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-2Relationships_In_The_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

April 10

Num. 28

The idea of a mutuality between God and man is quite a theme in the Bible. The sacrifices, offered on the altar as the table of Yahweh, were the bread of God (Num. 28:2), offered at the same times [morning and evening] as God fed His people. He feeds us, and beyond our understanding our sacrifices can give something to God, we can touch His heart, and thereby feed Him. This idea is brought out in Ez. 16:19: My meat [food] also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee & . The flour, oil etc. were the things Israel were to offer in sacrifice to God- the food with which they were to feed Him. Yet, Ezekiel goes on, they had offered them in sacrifice [fed them] to idols. Yet those very things were fed to Israel by God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-3Mutuality_Between_God_And_Man.htm

Prov. 20

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts" (Prov. 20:27); our self-examination is what reveals us to the Lord. What we think about at the memorial meeting, as we are faced with the memory of the crucified Saviour, is therefore an epitome of what we really are. If all we are thinking of is the taste of the wine, the cover over the bread, the music, what we didn't agree with in the exhortation, all the external things of our Christianity; or if we are sitting there taking bread and wine as a conscience salver, doing our little religious ritual to make us feel psychologically safe- then we simply don't know Him. We are surface level believers only. And this is the message we give Him. Our spirit / attitude is the candle of the Lord, with which He searches us. Our thoughts when confronted by the cross reveal us to Him who died on it. Likewise Joseph (one of the most detailed types of the Lord) knew / discerned his brethren by his cup (Gen. 44:5).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Joh 1

John describes himself as resting on Jesus' bosom (Jn. 13:23); yet he writes that Jesus is now in the Father's bosom (Jn. 1:18). He is saying that he has the same kind of intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus as Jesus has with the Father. Yet John also records how the Lord Jesus repeatedly stressed that the intimacy between Him and the Father was to be shared with all His followers. So John is consciously holding up his own relationship with the Lord Jesus as an example for all others to experience and follow. Yet John also underlines his own slowness to understand the Lord. Without any pride or self-presentation, he is inviting others to share the wonderful relationship with the Father and Son which he himself had been blessed with.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

April 11

Num. 29, 30

The Son of Man is given authority and power over all so that people of all nations, races and languages should serve Him. We must remind ourselves that out of the 5,000 or so languages in the world, the vast majority have no true Christian representatives; and only about half of them have the Bible in their own language. And as of the year 2000, only 12% of the world have English as a first or second language; yet the majority of those holding true Bible teaching, so far as we know, are English speaking. If, as indeed we believe, we alone preach the True Gospel...then we have a long way to go in fulfilling this. Either that, or the scope of God's acceptance of men from all these languages and nations over time and over space today is far wider than we as a community have thought. Both of these possible conclusions arise from meditation upon the fact that the authority of the Lord must be extended over every nation and language group. Both of them are intensely challenging to our community. Rev. 5:9 presents us with the picture of men and women redeemed from every kindred [tribe / clan], tongue [glossa- language], people [a group of people not necessarily of the same

ethnicity] and nation [ethnos- ethnic group, lit. those of the same customs]. This means that not only redeemed Yugoslavs will stand before the throne in the end; but Macedonians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrans, Bosnians...every ethnic group, with every custom, will have representatives who will have believed the Truth and been saved. This idea is confirmed by considering how 70 bullocks had to be sacrificed at the feast of ingathering (Num.. 29), prophetic as it was of the final ingathering of the redeemed. But 70 is the number of all Gentile nations found in Gen. 10. And it is written: When he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel (Dt. 32:8). A total of 70 went down with Jacob into Egypt; and thus 70 seems an appropriate number to connect with the entire Gentile world. And representatives of all of them will be finally ingathered.

It seems highly doubtful to me that over the past 2,000 years, the Truth has been taken to every ethnos, tribe, clan, custom and language, especially in Africa and Asia. So it follows that only once we have done it in our generation will this come true. The brethren in those parts especially have work to do yet, it seems to me. And we should all support them as best we can. I have a real belief that given the current rate of progress in preaching, the current generation could witness literally world-wide representation by those who understand true Christian doctrine- if we all do our bit. It is very difficult for me to reproduce in writing the kind of picture I have in my mind. But it is a thrilling and all consuming, all-demanding vision.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/5-2great_commission.htm

Prov. 21

God's judgment is a learning process for the observers: When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise(Prov. 21:11). We are to do this in this life; and its also going to happen in the day of judgment. Indeed it could be that this is the main reason for it- for the whole outcome and judgment process is known to God before judgment day.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/2.htm>

Joh 2, 3

As the Lord was the light of those that sat in darkness (Mt. 4:16), so Paul writes as if all the believers are likewise (Rom. 2:19). The light of Christ lightens every man who is born into the spiritual world (Jn. 3:9), with the inevitable effect that he too becomes the light of the world for others (Mt. 5:14). John was not the light in the sense that he was not Jesus personally (Jn. 1:8 RV); but he was in another sense a burning and shining light (Jn. 5:35) in that he like us was the light of the world on account of his connection with Jesus. The Son was sanctified and sent into the world(Jn. 10:36). And yet we too are sanctified (Jn. 17:17,19), and likewise sent into the world (Mk. 16:15). As the Lord was sent into the whole world, so are we (Jn. 17:18). So let's shine as lights of Him this very day!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

April 12

Num. 31

God makes concessions to human weakness. Having reminded Israel of how they sinned with the Midianites, He allows them to keep unmarried Midianites as wives (Num.. 31:16,18). We need to not only take comfort from this but do the same in our judgment of others' situations.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3Bible_Paradoxes.htm

Prov. 22

Solomon could write of the folly of the ruler who oppressed the poor (Prov. 22:16)- and yet do just that very thing. The Proverbs so frequently refer to the dangers of the house of the Gentile woman; yet the Song of Solomon shows the Egyptian girl dearly wishing that Solomon would come with her into her house. And Solomon, just like the foolish young man he wrote about, went right ahead down the road to spiritual disaster he so often warned others about. There's something deeply perverse within us, with which we battle each day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-2The_Song_Of_Solomon.htm

Joh 4

The Lord likened His preachers to men reaping a harvest. He speaks of how they fulfilled the proverb that one sows and another reaps (Jn. 4:37,38). Yet this proverb has no direct Biblical source. What we *do* find in the Old Testament is the repeated idea that if someone sows but another reaps, this is a sign that they are suffering God's judgment for their sins (Dt. 20:6; 28:30; Job 31:8; Mic. 6:15). But the Lord turns around the proverb concerning Israel's condemnation; He makes it apply to the way that the preacher / reaper who doesn't sow is the one who harvests others in converting them to Him. Surely His implication was that His preacher-reapers were those who had known condemnation for their sins, but on that basis were His humbled harvesters in the mission field. Let this be the basis of your witness today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

April 13

Num. 32

Consider God's statement that the whole people of Israel would have been left in the wilderness and now allowed to enter the land, if Gad and Reuben refused to cross the Jordan river (Num.. 32:15). But this would have broken the Divine promise of Num.. 14:31 that all those under 20 would enter the land. Even that promise, therefore, had unstated conditions attached to it. And yet God had yet another option- if they refused to go over Jordan, then they would forfeit their land and receive a different inheritance (Num.. 32:30). The complexities of these conditions are of course beyond us, because we are seeing only a part of the working of God's infinite mind. The point is, there are conditions attached to God's promises which aren't always made apparent to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

Prov. 23

There is no doubt that the Gospel must be a way of life, not certain actions like prayer, attendance of meetings and the breaking of bread which we religiously perform at certain times. God essentially seeks *the heart*, the unshareable self, to be given to Him: my son, give me thine heart (Prov. 23:26). The word spirit is used in different senses in different contexts. It can mean the thinking and consciousness, and yet also power. Yet these things are linked, in that as a man thinks and feels and desires in his heart, so he is (Prov. 23:7). Our physical actions, the way we use our power, are a reflection of our inner spirit. Likewise, the Spirit of God is *God in action*, God showing His power, and yet in its expression it articulates the inner mind and characteristics of God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

Joh 5

Even in His life, the Father committed all judgment unto the Son (Jn. 5:22). The Lord can therefore talk in some arresting present tenses: "Verily, verily, I say unto you [as judge], He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation". According to our response to His word, so we have now our judgment. He goes on to speak of how the believer will again hear His voice, at His return: "The hour is coming, and [also] now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live". Our response to His word now is a mirror of our response to His word then. Hence the hour is yet future, and yet now is. "The Son right now has the authority to execute judgment on the basis of response to His word. He will do this at the last day; and yet even as He spoke, He judged as He heard" [paraphrase of Jn. 5:27-30]. Because He *is* the Son of man, He even then had the power of judgment given to Him (Jn. 5:27). These present tenses would be meaningless unless the Lord was even then exercising His role as judge. When He says that He doesn't judge / condemn men (Jn. 3:17-21), surely He is saying that *He* won't so much judge men as they will judge themselves by their attitude to Him. His concentration was and is on saving men. The condemnation is that men loved darkness, and prefer the darkness of rejection to the light of Christ. Likewise Jn. 12:47,48: "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to [so much as to] judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me...hath one that judgeth him: the word [his response to the word, supplying the ellipsis] that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

April 14

Num. 33

Mt.1:17 mentions that there were 42 generations before Christ. This must have some connection with the 42 stopping places before Israel reached Canaan, as described in Num. 33:2. Thus the birth of Christ would be like God's people entering the promised land of the Kingdom in some way.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/james_d04.html

Prov. 24

he book of Proverbs is a good example of spiritual knowledge creating even more. The purpose of the Proverbs is to enable us " to perceive the words of understanding" (1:2); the words of the Proverbs make one more sensitive to other " words of understanding" . If, as has been suggested, Proverbs is a commentary on the Law, then we can see why the book opens by explaining that its purpose is to allow greater perception of other parts of the word. The very experience of wisdom and obedience creates a sweet palate for it, as eating honey does (Prov. 24:13,14 LXX). The man of knowledge increaseth [Heb. confirms / adds to] strength(Prov. 24:5).

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The Upward Spiral.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm)

Joh 6

The very human perspective of the disciples is almost predictably brought out by their response to the Lord s question to them about where to get bread to feed the hungry crowd. Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficientwas Philips response (Jn. 6:7). Andrew s comment that they had five loaves and two fishes surely carried the undertone that & and thats not even enough for us, let alone them- were starving too, you know!. The disciples wanted the crowd sent away, to those who sold food, so that they might buy for themselves (Mt. 14:15). As the Lord s extended commentary upon their reactions throughout John 6 indicates, these responses were human and selfish. And yet- and here is a fine insight into His grace and positive thinking about His men- He puts their very words and attitudes into the mouth of the wise virgins at the very moment of their acceptance at the day of judgment: The wise answered [the foolish virgins] saying, Not so, lest there be not enough [s.w. not sufficient, Jn. 6:7] for us and you; but got ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves(Mt. 25:9). Clearly the Lord framed that parable in the very words, terms and attitudes of His selfish disciples. He counted even their weakness as positive, and thus showed His desire to accept them in the last day in spite of it. Another reading of the connection would be that the Lord foresaw how even in the final moment of acceptance into His Kingdom, right on the very eve of judgment day, His people would still be as hopelessly limited in outlook and spiritually self-centred as the disciples were that day with the multitude. Whatever way we want to read this undoubted connection of ideas, we have a window into a grace so amazing it almost literally takes our breath away.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-7Disciples_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

April 15

Num. 34

The borders of the promised land appear to change between the various passages which delimit them. The borders here are certainly not the borders of the land promised to Abraham. In this we see how God is willing to change the details of His purpose with us, but above all He wishes to keep working with us- even if like Israel we fail to rise up to the ideal intentions He has for us. They were too weak in faith to inherit all the land promised to Abraham- but still God worked with them and redefined the borders accordingly.

Prov. 25

Although God joins together man and wife, He allows His work to be undone in that He concedes to separation, even when there has been no adultery (1 Cor. 7:11). Prov. 21:9; 25:24 almost seem to encourage it, by saying that it is better for a spiritual man to dwell in a corner of the housetop than to share a house in common (LKK *koinos*) with his contentious wife. The same word occurs in Mal. 2:14 LXX in describing a man's wife as his companion (*koinonos*). Thus God is willing to make concessions, to let principles conflict in order to elicit from us true self-examination and rightly motivated behaviour. And this should lead us to a grace-filled attitude to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-3Biblical_Ideal_Of_Marriage.htm

Joh 7

Jn. 7:38: " He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (" innermost being" , NIV) shall flow rivers of living (Gk. spring) water" . What " scripture" did the Lord have in mind? Surely Ez. 47:1,9, the prophecy of how in the Millennium, rivers of spring water will come out from Zion and bring life to the world; and perhaps too the references to spring water being used to cleanse men from leprosy and death (Lev. 14:5; 15:13; Num. 19:16). Out of the innermost being of the true believer, the spring(ing) water of the Gospel will *naturally* spring up and go out to heal men, both now and more fully in the Kingdom, aided then by the Spirit gifts. The believer, *every* believer, *whoever* believes, will preach the word to others *from his innermost being*, both now and in the Kingdom - without the need for preaching committees or special efforts (not that in themselves I'm decrying them). The tendency is to delegate our responsibilities to these committees. There is no essential difference between faith and works. If we believe, we will do the works of witness, quite spontaneously. And note how the water that sprung out of the Lord's smitten side is to be compared with the bride that came out of the smitten side of Adam. We, the bride, are the water; thanks to the inspiration of the cross, we go forth in witness, the water of life to this hard land in which we walk.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

April 16

Num. 35

We died and rose with Christ, if we truly believe in His representation of us and our connection with Him, then His freedom from sin and sense of conquest will be ours; as the man guilty of blood was to see in the death of the High Priest a representation of his own necessary death, and thereafter was freed from the limitations of the city of refuge (Num. 35:32,33). So the challenge comes down to us today- to live life feeling and living out our identity with the Lord Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-31Freedom_From_Sin.htm

Prov. 26

Prov. 26:10 makes a link between God as creator, and God as judge: The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors . The very fact that God formed us means that we are accountable to His judgment. We can never, not for a nanosecond, avoid or opt out of the fact that we were created by God. And therefore and thereby, we are responsible to Him as our judge.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3God_As_Creator.htm

Joh 8

It seems reasonable to conclude that Isaac was offered on or near the hill of Calvary, one of the hills (Heb.) near Jerusalem, in the ancient land of Moriah" (cp. 2 Chron. 3:1). The name given to the place, Yahweh-Yireh, means in this mount I have seen Yahweh. The events of the death and resurrection of the Lord which Isaac s experience pointed forward to were therefore the prophesied seeing of Yahweh. When Abraham *saw* the place [of Isaac s intended sacrifice] afar off" (Gen. 22:4), there is more to those words than a literal description. Heb. 11:13 alludes here in saying that Abraham *saw* the fulfilment of the promises" afar off". The Lord in Jn. 8:56 says that Abraham *saw* His day or time [usually a reference to His sacrifice]. And yet that place of offering was called by Abraham Jehovah Jireh , Jehovah will be *seen* . Note the theme of *seeing*. In some shadowy way, Abraham understood something of the future sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; and yet he speaks of it as the time when Yahweh Himself will be seen, so intense would the manifestation of God be in the death of His Son.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/4God_Manifestation_Cross.htm

April 17

Num. 36

If we deny our covenant with God by marrying into the world, we have effectively cut ourselves off from Him. The command for widows to marry " whom she will; only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39) is alluding back to the command to Zelophehad's daughters to marry " whom they think best" , but only " in" their tribe, otherwise they would lose the inheritance (Num.. 36:6,7). The implication is that those who do not marry " in the Lord" will likewise lose their promised inheritance. And this rather strange allusion indicates one more thing: the extent of the seriousness of marriage out of the Faith is only evident to those who search Scripture deeply. As man and woman within Israel were joint heirs of the inheritance, so man and wife are joint heirs of the inheritance of the Kingdom (1 Pet. 3:7).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-9Marriage_Out_Of_The_Faith.htm

Prov. 27

Sin never satisfies. Hell and destruction are never satisfied, and the eyes of man are never satisfied(Prov. 27:20 RV), Solomon wrote in his youth; and then in old age, he came to basically the same conclusion, having spent his life working back to the truth that he had been taught in his youth (Ecc. 1:8; 4:8). And there are many men and women who have done the same. We all tend to be empirical learners; and yet this is the great power of Gods word,

that through it we need not have to learn everything through our failures; but we can receive His Truth, trust it, and simply live by it. Otherwise we shall be like Solomon&

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-4Sin_Never_Satisfies.htm

Joh 9, 10

We too are lights in the dark world (Mt. 5:14; Phil. 2:15), because we are in Christ, *the* light of the world (Jn. 9:5). Notice how in the preceding verse, Jesus said spoke of how I must work the works of him that sent me (Jn. 9:4 AV), yet the RV reflects the manuscript difficulties by giving *We* must work . Could it be that the Lord said: I must work, we [you in me] must work ? The Lord Jesus was the light of the world on account of His resurrection: He first by the resurrection from the dead should proclaim light both to the [Jewish] people and to the Gentiles(Acts 26:23 RV). If we are baptized into His death and resurrection, we too are the light of this world in that the light of His life breaks forth in us. And this is exactly why belief in His resurrection is an imperative to preach it. And its why the great commission flows straight out of the resurrection narrative.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

April 18

Dt. 1

Joshua didn't give the people rest (Heb. 4:8); but he said he had (Josh. 22:4). He failed to fulfil the potential of Josh. 1:13-15- that *he* would lead the people to rest . The Messianic Kingdom could, perhaps, have come through Joshua-Jesus; but both Joshua and Israel would not. Dt. 1:38 states clearly that Joshua& he shall cause Israel to inherit [s.w. possess]the land. Yet by the end of Joshuas life, Israel were not inheriting the land in totality. He didnt live up to his potential. Note, in passing, that Gods prophecy here was conditional, although no condition is actually stated at the time. Gods opening commission to Joshua was that the people were to possess the whole land promised to Abraham, right up

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-10Joshua_Potential_Messiah.htm

Prov. 28

" He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13) cannot mean that God will not fellowship us unless we forsake every single sin we commit. We have given ample evidence for that earlier. And neither does this verse address the issues of whether *we* ought to forgive those who have not fully forsaken their sins, or whether we can fellowship those whom we have not forgiven. This verse speaks about God's response to confession of sin.

It may well be that Prov. 28:13 is the Old Testament equivalent of Paul's plea not to continue in sin, that grace may abound. If we " continue in sin" we are evidently not 'forsaking' our sins. We have shown that some sins cannot be 'forsaken', and that all of us continually sin,

confess and commit the same sin again. 'Forsaking' therefore does not refer to never committing the sin again. If our brother sins 490 times a day and confesses his sin, we are to forgive him- accepting that he has 'forsaken' the sin each time he confesses it. It is therefore difficult for *us* to say that a brother has not forsaken his sin if he confesses it. In the case of the brother who sins against us 490 times a day, his 'confessions' to us have to be treated by us as 'forsakings'. How *God* looks upon such a brother's continual sinning is not relevant to how *we* are supposed to respond to him. Therefore *for us*, 'forsaking' is to be understood as almost a synonym for 'confessing'.

Many verses in Proverbs allude to incidents in Israel's history. Prov. 28:13 clearly refers to David's confession of sin regarding Bathsheba: " I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5)- after a period of trying to 'cover' his sin. The emphasis on confession rather than any undertaking not to lust after women again suggests that 'confession' and 'forsaking' in Prov. 28:13 can be seen as synonymous.

The first part of Prov. 28:13 surely refers to Adam covering his sins in Eden, and the second half to his situation after confession. He did not 'forsake' disobedience to God's word, or giving in to the lust of the eyes and flesh. Likewise, David continued sinning after the Bathsheba incident, but Prov. 28:13 describes him, like Adam, as having 'confessed-and-forsaken'. He could not 'forsake' the specific sin with Bathsheba; but he had done so mentally, and God counts this as forsaking. There must be many Christadelphians, not to mention those who have married out of the Faith, who have *mentally* forsaken their sins of the past, and have truly confessed their sins; yet they find it impossible to rectify their position in outward terms.

Another feature of the Proverbs is their frequent allusion to the Mosaic law. The Hebrew for " forsaketh" literally means 'to let go', and a related word is used concerning the scapegoat being 'let go' into the wilderness, bearing Israel's sins which had been *confessed* over it. This is a reference to the day of Atonement. " He that covereth (atones for) his (own) sins (by himself) shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth (them over the scapegoat) and (lets them go) shall have mercy" . Thus the reader is encouraged to really believe that his confessed sins were being 'let go' in the scapegoat. This was the way to atonement, rather than trying to cover over one's sins as if they had never happened.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-3-7Works_Meet_For_Repentance.htm

Joh 11

Lazarus had died, and the evident desire of Martha was to see her brother again, there and then. But she didn't go running to the Lord with this desire. She simply and briefly stated her faith in the Lord's limitless power to resurrect, and her knowledge that He could use the Father's power as He wished. He read her spirit, He saw her fervent desire. And He responded to this as if it had been a prayer. He groaned deeply within Himself, and wept- not the tears of grief, as the Jews mistakenly thought (note how throughout the record they misunderstand what is really going on), but the tears which go with the groaning of serious prayer (Jn. 11:33-39). Having done this, He comments: " Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me *always*" . Because His spirit, His mind, was in constant contact with the Father, His prayers / desires were always communicated to Him, and always being heard. " Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me" could almost imply

that the Lord prayed for something, and then, after some interval, the answer came. We have an exquisite insight into the Lord's mind and the highly personal relationship between Father and Son in the words that follow: " I knew (not 'I know') that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe" . This almost certainly was not spoken out loud; this is a very rare and privileged glimpse into the unspoken communication between the Son and Father. The Lord seems to be adding this almost in half apology, lest it should seem that He prayed for Lazarus' resurrection, the answer came, and He then thanked the Father for it. It seems that this would be too primitive a sequence of events. He says that He *knew* that His request had been granted, and His utterance of thanks for the answer was for the peoples' benefit: that *they* might perceive that whatever the Son asked for, He received from God. But in reality, the Lord's thoughts to the Father seem to suggest, it wasn't a question of His prayers being accepted and answered. His Spirit, His thoughts, were one with the Father, and therefore it was not that His thoughts were considered, accepted and then God granted the request. What He thought was the prayer and it was the answer all in one. His 'mediation' for us is in the sense that He is the Lord *the Spirit*. There is no barrier (and was not any) between His mind and that of the Father.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm

April 19

Dt. 2

There is a harder side of God, the side we'd rather not see. God almost seems to underline the hardness of it in the way He records His word; thus He emphasizes that the " little ones" of the Canaanite cities were to be killed by the sword (Dt. 2:34), the male babies of the Midianites were to be killed by God's command (Num.. 31:17; which was exactly what Herod ordered). The unfulfilled believer will accept the gracious side of God (which is undoubtedly the aspect more emphasized in the Bible), but refuse to really accept this other side, while passively admitting that this harder aspect of God is revealed in His word. But it's all or nothing. We either accept the self-revelation of God in the Bible, or we reject it- that's how *He* sees it. Our temptation is to think that God sees things as we see them, to think that God is merely an ideal human being. But the day of judgment will reveal otherwise (Ps. 50:21). He is God, not man. It is not for us to set the terms. As the Lord taught in His parable of the approaching army, it's either total, abject surrender before the King of Heaven, accepting *whatever* terms He asks, or a foolhardy attempt to meet Him in head on confrontation (Lk. 14:31). Those who challenge the harder side of God are often called 'brave'; but their 'bravery' is foolhardy rebellion against the sovereign Almighty.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-8-3Unfulfilled_Believer_Syndrome.htm

Prov. 29

We know that the Proverbs are inspired by God, but all the same it is possible there to see Solomon's essential self-justification coming through- for so much of what he says and writes he surely thought of with reference to himself. His proverbs were in a sense his preaching and teaching to others- and yet as we can do so easily, he mixed this preaching with self-justification, a desire to prove himself to be right in the eyes of others. Many of us spent far too much of our preaching energy with this subconscious agenda.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice(Prov. 29:2) surely refers to the way the people rejoiced at Solomons ascension to power (2 Chron. 9:7).

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor(Prov. 29:7) sounds like a reference to the way Solomon judged the two prostitutes.

Likewise Prov. 29:14: The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever. Solomon is clearly referring to the promises to David, which he assumed were about him. He thought that because he had judged the poor harlots wisely, therefore he would be the promised Messiah.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-3Solomons_Self_Justification.htm

Joh 12

Rom. 10:9,10 stresses that belief *and* confession are necessary for salvation. This may be one of the many links between Romans and Johns gospel, in that Jn. 12:42 speaks of those who believed but wouldnt confess. Confession, a public showing forth of our belief, is vital if we are to be saved. Its perhaps worth noting that baptisms tend often to be attended largely by believers, and be performed indoors, e.g. in a bath at someones home, or a church hall. Its quite possible to learn the Gospel, be baptized- and nobody out in this world ever know. Its down to us to ensure this isnt true in our case.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

April 20

Dt. 3

Moses had told the Reubenites and Gadites that they could return to their possessions when the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, and they also possess the land (Dt. 3:20). But Joshua tells them to go to their possessions simply because their brethren were now at rest(Josh. 22:4). He significantly omits the proviso that their brethren must also possess the land- because much of the land wasn't possessed. Was this Joshua getting slack, thinking that the main thing was that people were living in peace, even though they weren't possessing the Kingdom? Or is it a loving concession to human weakness? Indeed, the conditions of Dt. 3:20 were in their turn an easier form, a concession to, the terms of the initial agreement in Num.. 32:20-32. God is eager to make concessions to our weakness, as He so wishes to save us. But this should inspire us to a closer walk with Him rather than a slacker one.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-9-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Joshua.htm

Prov. 30

The sensitivity of God to pagan sin, whether or not He raises them to account at the last day, is far higher than we would think. He even notices " the *eye* that mocketh at his father" (Prov.

30:17); even body language is analyzed by Him, as are our unconscious thoughts as we sleep (Ps. 17:3). And His sensitivity to our failures, as those responsible to Him, is even greater.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-9Sin_Is_Serious.htm

Joh 13, 14

Because Jesus is Lord and Master, and because He is our representative in every way, therefore all that He did and was becomes an imperative for us to follow. Thus: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn. 13:13,14). They called Him "Lord and Master", but *wouldnt* wash each other's feet. Like us so often, they had the right doctrinal knowledge, but it meant nothing to them in practice. To know Him as Lord is to wash each other's feet, naked but for a loincloth, with all the subtle anticipations of the cross which there are in this incident. Wherefore [because of the exaltation of Jesus] [be obedient and] work out your own salvation with fear and trembling [i.e. in humility]" (Phil. 2:12).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/6.htm>

April 21

Dt. 4

Moses pleaded with Israel to "take heed to thyself" that they kept God's word and taught it to their children, so that they would enter the land (Dt. 4:1,9). These words are alluded to by Paul in 1 Tim.4:16, where he says that attention to the doctrine of the new covenant will likewise save us and those who hear us. Paul very often quotes the words of Moses; Moses was his hero. Who are *our* Biblical heroes? Do *we* quote their words back to ourselves in daily life?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-1-3Moses_And_Paul.htm

Prov. 31

Prov. 31 was written by Bathsheba as advice to her son Lemuel (Solomon). In it she seems to be rebuking Solomon for his ways: "What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to them that destroy kings (i.e. women and adultery; surely this was said with a sideways glance at her own relationship with David)" (Prov. 31:3 RVmg). While Solomon was still quite young, i.e. within the lifetime of Bathsheba, she rebuked him for his wayward tendencies. Prov. 31 goes on to describe the ideal wife for Solomon; exactly the opposite of the women Solomon married. We are left to imagine Bathsheba's grief of mind, especially recalling her husband's special pride in Solomon. This was not just a case of protective mother checking out Solomon's girlfriends in a disapproving manner. She knew, through the inspiration of the Spirit as well as her own personal experience, the seriousness of messing with women. And she could see her ever so spiritual son going wrong in this. Her warnings in the same chapter against alcohol were likewise totally disregarded by Solomon in his later search for fulfillment.

in the flesh (Ecc. 2:3). His alcoholism likewise contradicted his own earlier condemnations of drink as being for the unwise (e.g. Prov. 20:1). Thus by turning to drink he was throwing off his former wisdom, even though his access to it remained with him (Ecc. 2:9; cp. 'But I still believe the Truth, you know'). She pleads with him not to drink lest he pervert the judgment of any that is afflicted (:5). And yet on his death, the complaints about his hard oppression of the people indicate that he did just this (due to his taking to drink, according to Prov. 31?). And yet Prov. 31 has Solomon praising his mother for her wisdom; he was proud of his mum, and yet he so miserably disobeyed her. He seems to have a mindset in which he felt it was impossible for him to be disobedient. The all important thing for him was who his parents and pedigree were.

So here was Solomon, brought up in the Truth by parents as devoted to God as could be, yet (one can guess) both outgoing, balanced and with a good sense of fun in family life. Here was Solomon, loving the Truth, deeply appreciating the ways of God, and yet throwing it all away by just not facing up to his own weakness, not seeing the urgency of his position, the seriousness of sin. Here was Solomon, dead keen on preaching to others, on inspiring Israel to be spiritual, discouraging the youngsters from messing with the girls from the surrounding nations, fulfilling as few others had done God's intention that Israel be a missionary nation, spreading His principles far and wide.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-3Psalm_45.htm

Joh 15, 16

An example of Christ's positivism in the last discourse is to be found in Jn. 15:15, where the Lord says He no longer calls them servants with Him as their Lord, but rather does He see them as friends. He has just reminded them that they call Him Lord, and rightly so, and therefore His washing of their feet was what they must do (Jn. 13:13). Earlier, He had rebuked them for calling Him Lord but not *doing* what He said (Lk. 6:46- this is in a speech directed at the disciples- Lk. 6:20,27.40). And yet He told others that His disciples *did* His word (Lk. 8:21). He was so positive about them to others, even though they did not *do* the consequences of calling Him Lord [e.g. washing each others feet- instead, they argued who was to be the greatest]. Perhaps when the Lord says that He will no longer relate to them as a Lord, with them as His servants, but rather simply as their friend, He is tacitly recognizing their failure, and preparing Himself to die for them as their friend rather than as their Master. And yet, as the Divine economy worked it all out, it was exactly through that death that they exalted Him as Lord and Master as they should have done previously.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-7Disciples_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

April 22

Dt. 5

The way Moses sees Israel as far more righteous than they were reflects the way the Lord imputes righteousness to us. He says that Israel didn't go near the mountain because they were afraid of the fire (Dt. 5:5), whereas Ex. 19:21-24 teaches that Israel at that time were not so afraid of the fire, and were quite inclined to break through the dividing fence and gaze in unspiritual fascination at a theophany which was beyond them. And Moses was but a dim

shadow of the love of Christ for us, with righteousness also imputed to us. And we are to respond by having a generally positive view of others, imputing righteousness to them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-3-1Themes_Of_Moses_In_Deuteronomy.htm

Ecc 1

Solomon forgot that his wisdom was a gift from God; he speaks in Ecc. 1:16 of how "I have gotten me great wisdom" (RV). His possession of truth led him to the assumption that this was a reward for his own diligence; whereas it was a gift by grace. Yet he himself knew that the wisdom given *by God* brings joy, whereas human wisdom leads to the grief and depression which afflicted Solomon (Ecc. 1:18 cp. 2:26). Solomon 'had the truth', he knew so deeply the true principles of Yahweh worship. But like us, he scarcely considered the enormity of the gap between the theory he knew and the practice of it in his own heart and living. We too have a tendency to build up masses of Biblical and spiritual knowledge, and to let the mere acquisition of it stop us from practicing it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-7Solomon_And_Wisdom.htm

Joh 17, 18

The purpose of the cross was to gather together in one all God's children (Jn. 11:52), that the love of the Father and Son might be realized between us (Jn. 17:26). If we support division, we are denying the essential aim of the Lord's sacrifice.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

April 23

Dt. 6, 7

Dt. 6:4 is far more than a proof text. Indeed God is one; but consider the context. Moses has set the people up to expect him to deliver them a long list of detailed commands; he has told them that God told him to declare unto them " all the commandments& that they may do them& you shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God has commanded you& you shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you& now these are the commandments& that you might do them& *hear therefore O Israel and observe to do it* [singular]& ". Now we expect him to reel off a long list of commands. But Moses mirrors that last phrase with simply: " *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one*" (Dt. 5:31-6:4). And in this context he gives no other commandments. " Observe to do *it* " is matched with " The Lord our God is one" . This is the quintessence of all the commands of God. And he goes straight on to say: " And these words& shall be in your heart" and they were to talk of them to their children in the house and by the way, bind them upon their hands and on the posts of their homes. It was the unity of God and the imperative from it to love Him with all the heart which is what was to be programmatic for their daily living. This is why it was Jewish practice to recite the *shema* several times a day, and also on their deathbed.

Dt. 6:1 RV reads: " Now this is *the commandment* [singular], the statutes and the judgments& the Lord our God is one" . And then they are told to write the statutes on their door posts etc.

It would have been hard to literally write all 613 of them there. Yet the whole way of life for Israel was epitomized in the single command that God is one. It was and is a *command*; not a mere statement. The Jewish zealots who died at Massada had as their battle cry " the Lord our God is one!" , and some time later Rabbi Akiba was flayed alive by the Romans, crying as the skin was stripped from his bones: " The Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might". And there are many accounts from the Nazi Holocaust of similar things.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp5.htm>

Ecc 2

It would seem from Ecclesiastes that Solomon lost any personal hope even of resurrection, and because of this he wonders why he ever initially had asked for wisdom: "I myself perceived that one event [death] happeneth to them all. Then said I in mine heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen even to me; and why was I then more wise?" (Ecc. 2:14,15 RV). "God giveth to the man that is good in his sight wisdom...this also is vanity" (Ecc. 2:26). This is a definite reference back to himself, who was given wisdom. But he now saw it as vanity, seeing there was no personal future hope. What this teaches us is that unless we personally believe we will be in the Kingdom, then all our wisdom is of no value to us personally....and in the end, we will like Solomon live a life that reflects this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-2Solomons_Attitude_To_The_Kingdom.htm

Joh 19

He had a baptism, i.e. a death and resurrection, to be baptized with, and He was " straitened until it be *accomplished*" (Lk. 12:50), the same word translated " finished" in Jn. 19:30. He agonized throughout His life, looking ahead to that moment of spiritual completion. The more we appreciate this, the more we will be able to enter into His sense of relief: " It is finished / accomplished" . And this too should characterize our lives; ever straining ahead to that distant point when at last we will attain that point of spiritual completeness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-13It_Is_Finished.htm

April 24

Dt. 8, 9

Dt. 8:2-7 describes God leading Israel through the wilderness for 40 years *so that* they could then enter the land. 'Israel' here must refer to the under 20s, Joshua, Caleb and the Levites. It was only they who went through the wilderness for 40 years. It was 'Israel' in this sense with whom God was in love. They considered in their heart, that God was treating them as a father does his son (Dt. 8:5). This has a practical significance to it; the under 20s would have been at variance with their natural parents, who knew they were condemned to death in the wilderness, and who refused to take their covenant with God seriously. That young remnant were led to meditate that God was their Heavenly Father; natural relationships that were not based around a true love of God, paled into insignificance as they spiritually matured. Dt. 8:3 says that they learnt to live by every word of God during those 40 years. This is just not true

of rebellious Israel generally. But the under 20s, Levites, Joshua and Caleb all developed into keen lovers of the word during that time. They are classic Biblical examples for young people.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-7Biblical_Examples_For_Young_People.htm

Ecc 3

There's reason to think that in some form, every one of our deeds will be considered at the day of judgment. "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked (at the second coming): for there is a time there for *every* purpose and for *every* work...for God shall bring *every* work into judgment, with *every* secret thing, whether it be good or bad" (Ecc. 3:17; 12:14). Note the emphasis on "*every*". Having spoken of how there is a *time* "to plant...pluck up...kill...heal" etc., we are then told that "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked (at the second coming): for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work" (Ecc. 3:1-8,17). Thus our actions in every department of life will be examined at "the place of judgment" (Ecc. 3:16). These verses must be considered in conjunction with those which speak of God's 'forgetting' of bad deeds on account of how people later chose to live. However, this need not mean that they are erased from God's infinite knowledge; all too often we perceive God's memory as a vast memory bank which can have our sins erased from it. But His knowledge knows no such bounds of human perception; yet He is willing not to hold those things against us, and to therefore count us as having never committed them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_4.htm

Joh 20, 21

The Jesus who loved little children and wept over Jerusalem's self-righteous religious leaders, so desirous of their salvation, is the One who today mediates our prayers and tomorrow will confront us at judgment day. Perhaps the Lord called the disciples His brethren straight after His resurrection in order to emphasize that He, the resurrected Man and Son of God, was eager to renew His relationships with those He had known in the flesh. Its as if He didn't want them to think that somehow, everything had changed. Indeed, He stresses to them that their Father is His Father, and their God is His God (Jn. 20:18). He appears to be alluding here to Ruth 1:16 LXX. Here, Ruth is urged to remain behind in Moab [cp. Mary urging Jesus?], but she says she will come with her mother in law, even though she is of a different people, and Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. This allusion would therefore be saying: OK I am of a different people to you now, but that doesn't essentially affect our *relationship*; I so love you, I will always stick with you wherever, and my God is your God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-19.htm>

April 25

Dt. 10, 11

Throughout the Law of Moses, the unity of Israel was emphasized. Moses in his last great speech as recorded in Dt. 10 seems to have purposefully confused his use of ye [plural]

and thee[singular] in addressing them; as if to show that they, the many, were also one body (e.g. Dt. 10:12-22; 11:1,2). And we each day must be mindful that we were not alone; that we were part of the greater body of Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

Ecc 4

Absolutely no other goals or achievements can ultimately satisfy us- the accumulation of wealth, sexual experience, power, artistic achievement...nothing, nothing, nothing, can ultimately fulfil us, apart from the imitation of Christ Jesus our Lord. Solomon is the great Biblical example, concluding at the end that "Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbour [i.e. his living out of a persona dictated by the society around him]. This also is vanity and a striving after wind" (Ecc. 4:4).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-2the_new_life.htm

Act 1

It also explains why the record of the Acts is a continuation of all that Jesus *began* to do and teach as recorded in the Gospels (Acts 1:1). The preachers were witnesses *of Jesus* (Acts 1:8). The logical objection to their preaching of a risen Jesus of Nazareth was: But He's dead! We saw His body! Where is He? Show Him to us! . And their response, as ours, was to say: I am the witness, so is my brother here, and my sister there. We are the witnesses that He is alive. If you see us, you see Him risen and living through us. In this spirit, we beseech men in Christ's stead. Just as the Lord strangely said that His own witness to Himself was a valid part of His overall witness, so our lives are our own witness to the credibility of what we are saying.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-7preaching_as_christ_did.htm

April 26

Dt. 12

Many parts of God's eternal law were only relevant to the period of time when Israel were in the wilderness. As an example, consider the eternal law of Lev. 17:5-7, stating that animals could only be slaughtered at the tabernacle. This would've meant that those who lived a distance from the sanctuary would have had to be vegetarians. Later, Moses amended this law. Dt. 12:20 ff. permitted Israel to slaughter their animals without going through the procedures of Lev. 17. Only the regulations about blood were preserved (Lev. 17:10 cp. Dt. 12:23). God is *so* eager for relationship with us that He tries so hard to accommodate us; and we should reflect this in our relationships.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/9-2.htm>

Ecc 5

There is evidently a hierarchy amongst the Angels as there will be among us in the age to come. It is interesting to see how the Angels relate to each other, and how their actions complement each other in order to bring about the trials of our lives. Once we grasp this idea, we can try to analyse the Angelic action in our lives and imagine all the different parts played by various Angels to bring it about. This system is maybe hinted at in Ecc. 5:8, where the hierarchy of corrupt human rulers and judges is contrasted with the righteous hierarchy of Heaven: "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgement and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the high ones (A. V. "highest" is plural) regardeth; and there be higher than they" (the high ones). Thus:

- The Most High One
- The Higher than the High Ones
- The High Ones

The "high ones" referring to Angels, it may be that the phrase "Most High" also refers sometimes to God manifested through an Angel who is higher than all the others, perhaps foreshadowing Christ, who was also made higher than the Angels. The idea of the Heavenly organization being like a court is often developed in other references to the Angels- e. g. there appear to be accusing and defending Angels who stand around the throne of God and obey His judgements.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

Act 2

We are Him to this world. But once someone is converted, they ought to come to see the Lord Jesus for who He is, with David we should be able to say that we see the Lord [and he meant, according to the New Testament, the Lord Jesus] ever before our face, so that we will not be moved by anything (Acts 2:25). And yet if this stage is not gone through, the convert will continue perceiving Jesus as His brothers and sisters, with the result that he or she will think negatively about the Lord for the sake of those who are in Him. The goal of all our preaching cannot be merely baptism. It is the inculcation of a life in Christ, a personal knowing of Him. This is why the first piece of literature I like to give anyone is a *Bible Companion* daily Bible reading planner. For they must discover it all for themselves, above all. So, to not give offence we must ever remind ourselves that we are Christ to our brethren. In us they see a reflection of Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/19-2not_giving_or_taking_offence.htm

April 27

Dt. 13, 14

The entire promises to Abraham and the fathers depended for their realisation upon human obedience: If ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep with thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers (Dt. 7:12). That covenant was initially given in terms which omitted direct reference to any conditions for fulfilment. But it would be kept by God if His people kept His ways. The promises that God would multiply the seed of Abraham were conditional also; *if* Israel separated

themselves from the peoples of the land, *then* He would multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers (Dt. 13:17). The strength of God's grace also makes some of His promises conditional in a different sense; thus He had promised Reuben and Manasseh that they could return to their possessions only when the others had possessed the land (Dt. 3:20). This condition never happened- yet they were allowed to return. And our very salvation from death and the consequences of sin is in a sense another example of this kind of thing.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

Ecc 6

Solomon speaks in Ecclesiastes 6 of the tragedy of possessing all things but being unable to enjoy them, because fulfilling one's own natural desires one after another really isn't much of a life. And thus he came to despise the concept of eternal life: " Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good" (Ecc. 6:6). " A thousand years" was likely a figure for eternity. He conceived of eternal life as being life as we now know it; and he didn't really want to live for ever as he'd fulfilled every natural desire. There's a real warning for us here. If we see the eternity of the Kingdom as a big carrot for us, it may not actually be that motivating for us in the long run of spiritual life. It is the quality and nature of that life which is surely important to us, and not the mere infinity of it. Indeed, eternal life as we now know it would be a curse rather than a blessing.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-2Solomons_Attitude_To_The_Kingdom.htm

Act 3, 4

Those who turn from sin are turned from sin by the Lord. The blessing promised to Abraham was not only forgiveness of sins, but that the Lord Jesus would *turn away* Abraham's seed from their iniquities (Acts 3:26). Yet we only become Abraham's seed by repentance and baptism. Our repentance and desire not to sin is therefore confirmed after our baptism.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm

April 28

Dt. 15

Having reminded them that if they were obedient, there shall be no poor among you; for the Lord shall greatly bless thee, Moses goes on to comment that the poor shall never cease out of the land- and he gives the legislation cognisant of this (Dt. 15:4,11). Moses realized by the time of Deuteronomy that they wouldn't make it to the blessings which were potentially possible. If Moses so knew Israel's weakness, the Lord Jesus knows our weakness even more finely, and deals with it with an even greater grace.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-3-1Themes_Of_Moses_In_Deuteronomy.htm

Ecc 7

Solomon had all the instruction he could wish for; but he didn't allow it to really sink home one little bit. He hit out on the search for an ultimately satisfying woman, but out of the 1000 he had he never found one (Ecc. 7:28), even when he sat down and analyzed each of them. And even politically, his marriages with all those Gentile women didn't seem to achieve him the support he desired from their home countries; Egypt gave refuge to Jeroboam, Solomon's main rival (1 Kings 11:40), even though he always acquiesced to his wives and even in his very old age he still didn't destroy the idol temples he built for them (2 Kings 23:13). Sin never satisfies- even in this life.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-4Sin_Never_Satisfies.htm

Act 5, 6

Christ's resurrection is an imperative to preach. When Peter is asked why he continues preaching when it is forbidden, he responds by saying that he is obeying God's command, in that Christ had been raised (Acts 5:29-32). There was no specific command from God to witness (although there was from Christ); from the structure of Peter's argument he is surely saying that the fact God raised Christ is *de facto* a command from God to witness to it which must be obeyed.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/2.htm>

April 29

Dt. 16

Passover was intended as a personal looking back to their beginnings, both as a nation and individually. It was to remind them of the day they came out of Egypt, all their lives (Dt. 16:3). This was written in the 40th year of their wanderings, as they were about to enter Canaan. Those who had literally come out of Egypt were largely dead; this verse is a general command to Jews of all generations. So God wanted them to see that in a sense they personally came out of Egypt at that time, even though they were not then born. So with us, while we were yet sinners, before we were born, Christ died for us. On the cross all God's people were as it were taken out of Egypt, in prospect delivered from sin. So we look back to the slain lamb in our feast, to us there in God's plan and delivered from sin, the power of the devil, sin in us destroyed by Christ's death in prospect on that cross. There is so much to personally meditate upon when we break bread.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-1passover_and_breaking_of_bread.htm

Ecc 8

Solomon simply didn't see the relevance of his wisdom to his own personal family life. Yet he proudly insisted: "Who is as the wise man?", as if the possession of theoretical truth and wisdom was the ultimate possession; and he then goes on to say that this made him beyond criticism (Ecc. 8:2-4). This surely *must* be a danger for any community or individual who considers they have "the truth" and who considers the possession of it to be of the utmost importance.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-7Solomon_And_Wisdom.htm

Act 7

It is worth trying to visualize the scene when Moses was full forty years old (Acts 7:23). It would make a fine movie. The Greek phrase could refer to Moses' birthday, and one is tempted to speculate that it had been arranged that when Moses was 40, he would become Pharaoh. Heb. 11:24 says that he refused and chose- the Greek tense implying a one off choice- to suffer affliction with God's people. It is tempting to imagine Moses at the ceremony when he should have been declared as Pharaoh, the most powerful man in his world & standing up and saying, to a suddenly hushed audience, voice cracking with shame and stress and yet some sort of proud relief that he was doing the right thing: I, whom you know in Egyptian as Meses, am Moshe, yes, Moshe the Jew; and I decline to be Pharaoh. Imagine his foster mother's pain and anger. And then in the end, the wonderful honour would have been given to another man, who became Pharaoh. Perhaps he or his son was the one to whom Moses was to come, 40 years later. After a nervous breakdown, stuttering, speaking with a thick accent, clearly having forgotten Egyptian & walking through the mansions of glory, along the corridors of power, to meet that man, to whom he had given the throne 40 years earlier.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-1-2Moses_The_Reproach_Of_Christ.htm

April 30

Dt. 17

Solomon 'had the truth', he knew so deeply the true principles of Yahweh worship. But like us, he scarcely considered the enormity of the gap between the theory he knew and the practice of it in his own heart and living. We too have a tendency to build up masses of Biblical and spiritual knowledge, and to let the mere acquisition of it stop us from practicing it. He flouted the explicit commandments not to get horses from Egypt, not to marry Gentile women, and not to multiply silver and gold (Dt. 17:17,18 cp. 1 Kings 10:21-29).

Dt. 17:17-20 is a warning to the King of Israel not to multiply horses and wives, lest his heart be turned away. It's a conscious prediction of Solomon's apostasy. But one result of such behaviour would be that the King's heart would be lifted up above his brethren (Dt. 17:20)- and this is exactly what happened to Solomon. He came to see himself as somehow above the rest of humanity, to the extent that he was convinced that he was acceptable to God, and that he could abuse his brethren because & he had wisdom. Significantly, Solomon uses the same Hebrew word translated lifted up in Dt. 17:20 in Prov. 4:8, when he speaks of how the possession of wisdom will exalt or lift up a person. He came to think that his mere possession of true wisdom gave him a superiority over others, and thus he was lifted up above his brethren. There are major warnings here for us, who for generations have possessed more Bible truth than any other church on earth. It *has*, sadly, led to a lifting up of many of our hearts above our fellow man and even our fellow brethren & Yet this doesn't take away from the wonderful truth of it all.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-7Solomon_And_Wisdom.htm

Ecc 9

Solomon went ahead with his works rather than grappling with the reality of sheer grace. He so wanted to *do* something. He betrays this when he writes in Ecc. 9:7: “God now accepteth thy works”. The Hebrew translated “accepteth” means literally to satisfy a debt, and is elsewhere translated ‘to reconcile self’. He saw works as reconciling man’s debt to God, rather than perceiving that grace is paramount. He keeps on about David his father; and yet there was a crucial difference. David perceived the need for grace as the basis of man’s reconciliation with God; whereas Solomon thought it was works. David wrote that God wants a broken heart and not thousands of sacrifices; yet Solomon offered the thousands of sacrifices, but didn’t have the contrite heart of his father.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-2Solomon_And_The_Temple.htm

Act 8

Acts 8:1 records that the entire membership of the Jerusalem ecclesia was scattered; the way we read of them numbering thousands by the time of Acts 21:20 suggests that to avoid persecution those who remained reconciled themselves with the temple, becoming a sect of Judaism, presumably with the tithe and temple tax going to the temple rather than to the ecclesia. These thousands of Acts 21 were probably largely converted since the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen. The original Jerusalem ecclesia had gone and preached to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19,20), which wasn't what the later Jerusalem ecclesia supported. Indeed, Acts 11:22 goes straight on to record that the Jerusalem ecclesia sent representatives to find out what was going on. In order to escape further persecution, the Jerusalem ecclesia threw in their lot with the temple and orthodox Judaism. Finally Paul wrote to the Jerusalem ecclesia, as recorded in Hebrews. He sorrows that they fail to see the supremacy of Christ over Moses, and that despite initially enduring such persecution and loss of their goods (during the early persecutions), they had lost their real faith in Christ. The fact they weren't *then* being persecuted indicates they had reconciled with the temple. They needed to hold on, to keep the joy of faith they once had, rather than become hard hearted, judgmental, works-centred. But they didn't listen.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-2-2Politics_In_The_Church.htm

May Readings

May 1

Dt. 18

God's intention that the king of Israel should personally copy out all the commandments of the Law was so that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren (Dt. 17:20)- i.e. reflecting upon the many requirements of the Law would've convicted the King of his own failure to have been fully obedient, and therefore his heart would be humbled. And soon after this statement, we are hearing Moses reminding Israel that Messiah, the prophet like unto Moses, was to be raised up (Dt. 18:18). Human failure, and recognition of it, prepares us to accept Christ. To this end, God worked through Israel's weakness, time and again. He even used it as a path towards His provision of Messiah. God wanted to speak to them directly, but in their weakness they asked that He not do this. Instead of giving up with them, as a Father whose

children say they don't want to hear His voice & instead God goes on to tell Moses: They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren [a prophecy applied to Christ in the New Testament] & and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Dt. 18:17,18).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/spgrowth.htm>

Ecc. 10

Solomon knew and warned that a little folly can destroy the man who is in reputation for wisdom and honour (Ecc. 10:1). Solomon had honour [s.w.] to an unprecedented extent (1 Kings 3:13). But in the same book he admits that he, the man famed world-wide for wisdom, gave himself to folly (Ecc. 2:3). He knew so well the error and folly of his ways, but he could only preach the lesson but not heed it. He saw that wisdom exceedeth folly (2:13)- but so what...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-8The_Mind_Of_Solomon.htm

Acts 9

Paul was told by Jesus that all those whom he had persecuted were in fact Jesus personally (Acts 9:5). And this idea of the believer being so totally bound up with his or her Lord continues with Paul throughout his life. Our brethren are to be Jesus to us- how we treat the least of them is how we treat Him, and we in turn are to be Christ to our brethren- and the world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

May 2

Dt. 19

There are in some ways different levels on which we can serve God. I find this thought helpful in lessening my tendency to be harsh in judgment of others. Here's an example: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19:18). But they *could* avenge, and provisions were made for their human desire to do so (Num. 35:12; Dt. 19:6). These provisions must also be seen as a modification of the command not to murder. The highest level was *not* to avenge; but for the harshness of men's hearts, a concession was made *in some cases*, and on *God's* prerogative. *We* have no right to assume that prerogative.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-2Living_On_Different_Levels.htm

Ecc. 11

The tragic brevity of life means that "childhood and youth are vanity", we should quit the time-wasting follies of youth or overgrown childhood (and the modern world is full of this), and therefore too "remove anger from your heart and put away evil from your flesh" (Ecc. 11:10 AVmg.). Ecclesiastes uses the mortality of man not only as an appeal to work for our creator, but to simply have faith in His existence. Likewise: "We had the sentence of death in

ourselves [" in our hearts we felt the sentence of death" , NIV], *that* we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9). The fact we are going to die, relatively soon, and lie unconscious...drives the man who seriously believes it to faith in the God of resurrection. It seems that at a time of great physical distress, Paul was made to realize that in fact he had " the sentence of death" within him, he was under the curse of mortality, and this led him to a hopeful faith that God would preserve him from the ultimate " so great a death" as well as from the immediate problems. Death being like a sleep, it follows that judgment day is our next conscious experience after death. Because death is an ever more likely possibility for us, our judgment is effectively *almost upon us*. And we must live with and in that knowledge.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp10.htm>

Act 10

Peter's grasp of the extent of Christ's Lordship was reflected in the scope of his preaching.. He was taught in the Cornelius incident that because Christ is "Lord of *all*", therefore men from *every* (s.w. "all") nation can receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:35,36). He makes the link back to the preaching commission in Acts 10:43: *all* in *every* nation who believe can receive remission of sins (s.w. Lk. 24:47)- as he was commanded to preach in the great commission. He came to see that the desperate need for reconcillation with God was just as strong for those who had not directly slain His Son; for, Peter may have mused, all men would have held him "condemned by heaven" if they had been Jerusalem Jews. And he realized that Christ was truly Lord of all, all men, everywhere, and not just of a few hundred thousand Jews. And with us too. The wider and the higher our vision and conception of the ascended Christ, the wider and more insisently powerful will be our appeal to literally all men. Yet Peter had heard the Lord's words, when He had asked them to tell all nations, and when He had prophesied that His cross would draw all men unto Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-3-4Appreciation_Of_Christ's_Exaltation.htm

May 3

Dt. 20

The love of Jesus was ever seeking to appreciate the perspective and motivations of others; He could even ask for His crucifiers to be forgiven " for they know not what they do" . His love and sensitivity must become ours. We must be substantially transformed in the depths of our being, in the intricacies of our thoughts, feelings and dispositions, until we are permeated with the love that Christ had. The Law of Moses sought to inculcate a culture of care and sensitivity to others, and this spirit was fulfilled ultimately in the life and death of the Lord. The continued stress on not cooking a kid in its mothers milk was surely to teach sensitivity to the feelings of the mother goat- to encourage the Israelite to feel for others, even if they are animals, and seek to enter something of their feelings. And the sensitivity and thoughtfulness of God extends even to His plant creation: & thou shalt not cut [some trees] down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? (Dt. 20:19 RV). And how much *more* sensitive is the Father to humankind!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-7value_of_persons.htm

Ecc. 12

When "the spirit returns to God" (Ecc. 12:7) is this a reference to our Angel physically returning to Heaven, having been with us on earth for much of our lives? Heb. 12:22,23 is a passage that seems to defy convincing exposition: "Ye are come unto. . . an innumerable company of Angels. . . to the spirits of just men made perfect". This would equate the spirits with the Angels who had been their guardians. Two other references in Hebrews to "spirits" are to Angels (Heb. 1:7,14). Other passages which seem to imply some consciousness after death would therefore refer to our guardian-Angel spirit; e. g. the souls under the altar crying to God after their death (Rev. 6:9,10). The implication could well be that we should ourselves endure, because we are now associated with the Angels who were the guardians of faithful men of the past who endured. The thought is obviously intended by the writer to encourage us to hold on, knowing that as the guardian Angels stood by and perfected through trial the lives of the faithful in the past, so they will with us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels8_1.htm

Act 11, 12

The original Jerusalem ecclesia had gone and preached to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19,20), which wasn't what the later Jerusalem ecclesia supported. Indeed, Acts 11:22 goes straight on to record that the Jerusalem ecclesia sent representatives to find out what was going on. In order to escape further persecution, the Jerusalem ecclesia threw in their lot with the temple and orthodox Judaism. Finally Paul wrote to the Jerusalem ecclesia, as recorded in Hebrews. He sorrows that they fail to see the supremacy of Christ over Moses, and that despite initially enduring such persecution and loss of their goods (during the early persecutions), they had lost their real faith in Christ. The fact they weren't *then* being persecuted indicates they had reconciled with the temple. They needed to hold on, to keep the joy of faith they once had, rather than become hard hearted, judgmental, works-centred. But they didn't listen.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-2-2Politics_In_The_Church.htm

May 4

Dt. 21

The women beheld Christ's dead corpse from afar. This seems to be encouraging us to imagine the picture of the Lord just at that point; the dead body on the cross, the victory achieved. It was only at this stage that the curse of Dt. 21 came into effect: "cursed (Heb. a curse; the Hebrew is *always* translated this way) is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Dt. 21:22,23). These words have been misunderstood as meaning that the Lord as a living being was under one of the Law's curses of condemnation. This cannot be. It must be remembered that crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish method. The Deuteronomy passage was not written with reference to crucifixion, but rather to the custom of displaying the already dead body of a sinner on a pole as a witness and warning (cp. the display of Saul's body). Sin brought the curse; and so every sinful person who died for their sin was bearing the curse of God. They were to be buried quickly as a sign of God taking no pleasure in the death of the wicked. The Lord died the death of a sinner; He bore our sins, and therefore our curse (Gal. 3:13,14). Every condemned sinner whose body had been displayed had been a type of the sinless Son of God. He was exhibited there for one or two hours (until Joseph got the permission to take

the body), totally, totally united with sinful man. And then, because God had no pleasure in this condemnation of sin, the body was taken and buried.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-15Pierced_Christ.htm

Song 1

The Song of Solomon is the record of Solomon's romance with Pharaoh's daughter. Of course, this was an explicit breach of the crystal clear commandment not to marry women from Egypt. He should have admired neither the horses nor the women of Egypt (Song of Solomon 1:9); yet he begins his Song with an unashamed breach of the command not to desire either of these things. The unashamedness of Solomon coupled with his spirituality indicates that at this time he was genuinely convinced that what he was doing was deeply spiritual; when in fact it was completely carnal. He totally ignored his own advice about choosing a spiritual woman as a wife. The girl he loved liked wine- unusual, perhaps, in that culture; she loves him because of his ointment, and he loves her because of her jewellery (Song of Solomon 1:2,3,10; 4:4). He says that deep kissing with her gives the same after effect as drinking enough wine that you talk in your sleep afterwards (Song of Solomon 7:9). Its all very human and carnal.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-2The_Song_Of_Solomon.htm

Act 13

Peter not only preached on Pentecost. His life became dedicated to the work of the Gospel. Paul referred to the Jews to whom he preached as his "brethren" (Acts 13:26), and it may be that Peter at least initially understood his commission to "strengthen thy brethren" as meaning preaching to his unbelieving Jewish brethren (although the same Greek word is used by Peter regarding his work of upbuilding the converts, 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:12). If misbelieving Jews are called "brethren", then all the phobia about fellowshipping others who may misunderstand things seems totally misplaced.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-3-4Appreciation_Of_Christ's_Exaltation.htm

May 5

Dt. 22

For Hebrew men like Hosea, the chastity of virgins and the faithfulness of wives were the most important thing in their personal lives (cp. Dt. 22:13-30). And so, the point is being made, God values our faithfulness supremely. The man had a deep sense of shame before the whole world if the woman he trusted betrayed him (Jer. 2:37). The shame of God over Israel was before the whole cosmos, not just some village in Palestine. No wonder Jeremiah wept at the thought of what was being done to God in this way (Jer. 8:22-9:3). God is at stake, none less than this, in His relationship with us. So let us this day take Him and our relationship with Him with absolute seriousness.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Song 2

Solomon later turned to alcohol for a while (Ecc. 1)- yet his girlfriend says that Solomon took her to house of wine (Song 2:4 RVmg.) whilst still young. The seeds of failure were there early on- he preached against wine in Proverbs, and yet still drunk himself. Will we this day be so hypocritical?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-1Solomons_Apostacy.htm

Act 14, 15

Pagans at Lystra were so overcome by his oratory that they were convinced he was the god Mercury come down to earth; it took Paul quite some effort to persuade them that he was an ordinary man (Acts 14:12). This was the man Paul. He had undoubted ability as a preacher. In passing, the Corinthians mocked his weak physical presence; and yet Paul had undoubted charisma and power of personality, right up to the end. Was it not that he consciously suppressed the power of his personality when he visited Corinth? This was humility and self-knowledge indeed. Indeed, his reasoning in 2 Cor. 10,11 is that he could present himself to Corinth as quite a different brother Paul than what he did. This is a pattern to us, in becoming all things to all men.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-3Preaching_Of_Paul.htm

May 6

Dt. 23

Dt. 23

The fact that God's word is true means that we also ought to be truthful- for we should speak as oracles of God. Moses surely intended a connection between his words recorded in Dt. 8:3 and Dt. 23:23- for they are the only times he uses a particular Hebrew word translated proceed or go out, within the same speech uttered the same day: By every word that *proceedeth* out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live & that which *goeth forth* [s.w. proceedeth] out of *thy* lips / mouth thou shalt keep and perform. The influence of continually hearing *God's* word should be that *our* words are likewise truthful and trustworthy. The fact that the Bible as God's word is true has implications for our own truthfulness. *Pistos* is listed as a fruit of the spirit in Gal. 5; but the idea it can carry is not so much of faith in the sense of belief, but of faithfulness, loyalty, reliability, utter dependability. If this is how God's words are to us, then this is how we and our words should be to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-8-1Inspired_Infallible_Word_Of_God.htm

Song 3

In Song 3:1 we find the girl again at night, dreaming of having Solomon with her. But when one night he does actually come, she doesn't go to meet him immediately. And there's a warning for us. Like Israel we may 'desire the day of the Lord', study prophecy about it, write about it, enthuse about it. But when He comes, to what end will it be to us? Will we *in a moment* drop everything and go to Him, believing that He loves us just as we are? Or will we run off to buy oil, slap make up on...? The tragedy of Solomon's girl was that she started

putting her make up on, and then her heart smote her and she opened the door, her hands dropping perfume all over the bolt (Song 5:5 RV). She finally realized that he had loved her for who she was, how she was. But it was tragically too late. He'd gone. We need to learn that lesson *now*, to know the love of Christ... so that in that moment when we know for sure 'He's back!', we will without hesitation *go to Him* with that perfect / mature love, that casts out fear.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_3_1.htm

Act 16, 17

If we understand 'the law of Christ' in the same sense as 'the law of Moses' then we have missed the crucial message that is in Christ; we have merely exchanged one legal code for another. His is a spirit of grace which specifically, legally demands nothing and yet by the same token demands our all. And so in all our living and thinking, we must constantly be asking 'What would Jesus do? Is this the way of God's Spirit? Is this how the law of love teaches me to act? '. To live the life of the Spirit, to construct in daily living an ambience of spiritual life, is therefore a binding law. Living according to the spirit / mind / example of Jesus will mean that we naturally find the answers to some of the practical dilemmas which may arise in our lives. Thus we read that when Paul tried to go to preach in Bithynia "the spirit of Jesus suffered them not" (Acts 16:7 RV). Could it not be that the spirit of Jesus, a life lived after His pattern, compelled them to (let's imagine) go to visit a sick child and this meant they missed the transport leaving for Bithynia?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

May 7

Dt. 24

True Christianity places a remarkable value on the worth of the individual person. Even in the Old Testament, God had spoken of gathering His people one by one (Is. 27:12). To deal with another person as a slave or chattel, to not treat a person as a person, was seen even under Mosaic Law as meriting the death penalty- for it was as if a person had been killed by treating them like that (Dt. 24:7 RVmg.). The Old Testament reflects that God has a heart for all humanity- not just Israel.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-7value_of_persons.htm

Song 4

The blindness of Solomon is driven home time and again. He warned the typical young man about being captivated by the eyelids of the Gentile woman (Prov. 6:25); yet it was the eyes of Miss Egypt that he openly admitted stole his heart (Song 4:9; 6:5). The strange woman has words like a honeycomb (Prov. 5:3); and yet this is exactly how Solomon found his woman's words (Song 4:11). Will we be blind, in some ways, at some times, today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-4Sin_Never_Satisfies.htm

Act 18, 19

The Gospel is in itself the duty of preaching it. In Corinth, "Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews..." (Acts 18:5 RV). The AV has "pressed in the spirit"; knowing the word somehow compelled Paul to testify of it. "The word (*logos*) of God ", a phrase which the NT mainly uses with reference to the Gospel rather than the whole Bible, is sometimes used as parallel to the idea of preaching the Gospel (Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 20:4 and especially Col. 1:25). Paul speaks of having 'fulfilled' the Gospel by preaching it (Rom. 15:19 Gk.); the Gospel is in itself something which demands to be preached by those having it.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1.htm>

May 8

Dt. 25

To despise your brother, to disregard his importance as a person, is to be seen as an ultimate sin- so Jesus taught. In this light we should seek to avoid the many terms of abuse which are so common today: " a right idiot" etc. The Law taught that one should not curse a deaf person. Think what this really means. Surely the essence of it is that we should never be abusive, in any form, to or about anyone, even if it is sure that they will never know or feel our abuse. The Law also taught that a man must not be over punished, or else, if you did this, you considered him light(Dt. 25:3 Heb.). The weight of persons, the immense meaning attached to them, is not accepted by us if our judgment of them is too harsh or severe.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-7value_of_persons.htm

Song 5

When the Lord speaks about knocking on the door of our hearts and our response (Rev. 3:20), He is picking up the language of the Song of Solomon 5:2-8, where the voice of the bridegroom (cp. Jesus) knocks at the door of the bride. The Song of Solomon appears to refer to a hopeless romance between King Solomon and a dark skinned Egyptian girl. Despite the passionate expressions both make to each other, there is a tension in the Song, something unsatisfactory in the relationship. They meet in secret, keep disappearing, the Jerusalem girls mock the Egyptian girl, the girl wishes that Solomon was an Egyptian like her so that they wouldn't be despised; and rather than the Song culminating as we would expect in a wedding, instead the couple part from each other. There are some New Testament links which suggest that the girl can be seen as a type of the ecclesia [e.g. Song 4:7 = Eph. 5:27]. But Song 5 seems to give insight into the unworthy elements of the potential bride of Christ.

Notice the sequence there:

While she sleeps at night, the bridegroom comes and knocks [unworthy virgins sleeping instead of being awake; the Lord Jesus comes; Lk. 12:36 uses the same figure, of the Lord's return being like a knock]

She replies that she's not dressed properly, makes excuses about her feet, she can't come and open [the unworthy don't respond immediately]

He tries to open the door from the outside, putting his hand through the latch-hole [by grace, after the pattern of Lot being encouraged to leave Sodom when he hesitated, the Lord will be patient even with sleepy virgins in His desire for their salvation]

Her heart is moved with desire for him [the rejected still call Jesus 'Lord, Lord'; they love Him emotionally]

She starts dressing herself up, and then is overtaken by desire and rushes to the door, her hands dripping all kinds of perfume and make up over the lock as she opens it [cp. the virgins going to buy oil, the unworthy trying to prepare themselves all too late, not trusting that their Lord loves them as they are at the moment of His coming]

But he's gone , he *withdraws himself* [all too late, the door is shut, He never knew them]

Her soul fails [the shock of rejection]

She seeks him but doesn't find him, calls but he doesn't answer [Prov. 1:28; the rejected call, but aren't answered; they seek the Lord early, but don't find Him. Hos. 5:6 is likewise relevant: "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to *seek* the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath *withdrawn himself* from them".]

She feels tired of her relationship with him ("sick of love").

She is persecuted by the world around her ["condemned with the world"]

The basic point is that if we don't immediately respond to the Lord's knock, we show ourselves to not love Him enough. If we don't open immediately, it's as if we didn't open at all. The Lord wants us as we are, bleary eyed and without our make up, but with a basic overriding love of Him , and faith in the depth of His love, which will lead us to immediately go out to meet Him . This will be the ultimate and crucial divide- between those who believe in the Lord's love for us, who have known the humanly unknowable love of Christ; and those who think they need to prepare *themselves* to make themselves good enough for Him. Solomon called to the girl through the keyhole: "...my undefiled...". But she doesn't want to immediately come to Him because she doesn't want to meet him with 'defiled' feet (Song 5:2,3). She couldn't believe his words, that in his eyes, she was *undefiled*. And the enormity of the passion of Christ for us is likewise so hard for us to accept.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_3_1.htm

Act 20

We are covered with His righteousness, and therefore have a share in His victory; and yet it also means that we must act as He did and does. Paul felt so truly and absolutely forgiven that he could say that he was "pure from the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26). Yet as he said that, he must surely have had the blood of Stephen on his mind, trickling out along the Palestinian dust, as the clothes of the men who murdered Stephen lay at Paul's feet as a testimony that *he* was responsible for it. But he knew his forgiveness. He could confidently state that he was pure from that blood. Righteousness had been imputed, the sin covered- because he was in Christ.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-1What It Means To Be In Christ.html>

May 9

Dt. 26

We are to live out in practice what we have been made in status by our gracious Father. The very fact He counts us as in Christ, as the spotless bride of His Son, must be both felt and lived up to by us. The way He counts us like this is a wonderful motivation to rise up to it all. Consider how God told Israel that *if* they kept His commandments, *then* they would be His peculiar treasure (Ex. 19:5). This conditional promise is then referred to by Moses as having been fulfilled- Israel became His peculiar treasure by status even though they did *not* keep His commandments (Dt. 7:6; 14:2 s.w.; Ps. 135:4). Moses concludes by saying that the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people [s.w.]& *that* thou shouldest keep all his commandments(Dt. 26:18). See what s happening here. God said that *if* they were obedient, *then* they would be His special people. Yet He counted them as His special people even though they were not obedient. And He did this so that they would be so touched by this grace that they *would* be obedient.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/12.htm>

Song 6

Note how the Angelic hosts of God are contrasted with the hostsof the enemies of God s people (2 Sam. 5:24; 1 Sam. 17:45,46; Is. 37:36). David and Goliath is the great example- David came to the *hosts* of the Philistines in the name of the God of Angelic *hosts*. And hence his faithful confidence that the battle is the Lords (1 Sam. 17:47). This is a comfort not only in times of physical danger but in realizing that in any situation, there are far more with us than with our opponents. In every battle , we of course should be on the Lords side- and the battle is His, and ultimate victory assured. Perhaps these things are the reference of the enigmatic Song 6:13, which speaks of the dance or company of the two hosts- those of Angels and the corresponding hosts on earth? The Angelic hosts stand opposed to the hosts of opposition we face today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels2_1.htm

Act 21, 22

Philip prophesied by the Holy Spirit about Paul: “So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hand of the Gentiles”. They “shall” do this, he said. And many other prophets said the same (Acts 20:23). “And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem” (Acts 21:11,12). Those brethren evidently understood the word of prophecy as conditional- its’ fulfilment could be avoided by Paul not going to Jerusalem. Indeed, there were prophecies that said he should *not* go up to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4). Yet Paul went, knowing that if he died at Jerusalem then the will of God would be done (Acts 21:14). All this surely shows that prophecies are open to human interpretation; they can be seen as commandment (e.g. not to go to Jerusalem), but it all depends upon our perception of the wider picture.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

May 10

Dt. 27

Israel were told that *because* they were the people of God, in covenant with Him, *therefore* they *had* to be obedient. If they were disobedient, they would be cursed. And if they backed out of being Gods people, they were also cursed (Dt. 27:9,19,26). There was no way back: total devotion to obedience. God would either rejoice over them to bless them, or rejoice over them to curse them (Dt. 28:63). He isnt passive; His energy will be expended upon us one way or the other.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-8-2The_Logic_Of_Devotion.htm

Song 7

And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her (Ecc. 7:26) is a clear reference back to Solomon s own entanglement. In his younger days, he had found the hair of thine head like the purple of a king [i.e. he imagined her to be suited to him, the King of Israel, when she wasnt]; the king is held captive in the tresses thereof (Song 7:5 RV). Solomon understood so much about his own failure- but it somehow didn't personally and urgently register with him. Are we similar?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-8The_Mind_Of_Solomon.htm

Act 23, 24

Consider Paul's claim that he had lived in all good conscience before God all his life (Acts 23:1). The Lord Jesus Himself informs us that Paul kicked against the pricks of his own conscience (Acts 9:5). And in any case, Paul elsewhere says that his good conscience actually means very little, because it is God's justification, not self-justification through a clear conscience, which is ultimately important (1 Cor. 4:4 RSV). It seems Paul was aware of his weak side when he comments how despite his own clear conscience, God may see him otherwise (1 Cor. 4:4 RSV); and surely this was in his mind. So how true were Paul's words in Acts 23:1? It seems that he said them in bitter self-righteousness. Soon afterwards he changes his life story to say that he had always *tried* to have a good conscience (24:16). And we too must grow.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-2-2Weakness_Of_Paul.htm

May 11

Dt. 28

There's a logic about devotion to God. Total freedom to do what *we* personally want is not possible. We are slaves, we can't serve two masters. So why not serve Christ rather than the Biblical devil? Likewise Moses offered Israel the choice of bondservice to either Yahweh or their enemies (Dt. 28:47,48). And Mic. 2:3 likewise reminds Israel that they will be under the

yoke of judgment if they reject Yahweh's yoke. The Lord spoke of His servants having a light yoke (Mt. 11:30). The Bible minded among His hearers would have thought back to the threatened punishment of an iron yoke for the disobedient (Dt. 28:48). 'It's a yoke either way', they would have concluded. But the Lord's yoke *even in this life* is light, and has promise of the life which is to come! The logic of taking it, with the restrictions it inevitably implies (for it is a yoke), is simply overpowering.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-9The_Logic_Of_Endurance.htm

Song 8

Solomon made the classic mistake of assuming that his will and word were effectively equivalent to the word of God. In Prov. 6:21 he speaks of the need to bind the law about your heart and neck; but in Song 8:6 he asks his Gentile lover to set ME as a seal upon thine heart and arm. And often in Proverbs he uses the language of the blessings for keeping God's law and turns them into the blessings for keeping *his* law; e.g. My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart (Prov. 7:1,2). And we all do the same in essence, whenever we assume that our consciences are effectively the will of God; when we play God by allowing our words and will to count as if they are *His* word.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-7Solomon_And_Wisdom.htm

Act 25, 26

Paul takes a prophecy concerning how Christ personally would be the light of the whole world (Is. 49:6), and applies it to himself in explanation of why he was devoted to being a light to the whole world *himself* (Acts 13:47- although 26:23 applies it to Jesus personally). Paul even says that this prophecy of Christ as the light of the world was a *commandment* to him; all that is true of the Lord Jesus likewise becomes binding upon us, because we are *in* Him. Note that Paul says that God has commanded *us* to witness; it wasn't that Paul was a special case, and God especially applied Isaiah's words concerning Christ as light of the Gentiles to Paul. They apply to *us*, to all who are in Christ. And when on trial, Paul explained *his* preaching to the Jews "and then to the Gentiles" as being related to the fact that he had to "shew" the Gospel to them because Christ rose from the dead to "shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:20,23). In other words, he saw his personal preaching as shewing forth the light of Jesus personally.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

May 12

Dt. 29

Covenant relationship brings a natural desire to live within the atmosphere of God's spirituality. For Israel in covenant with God, absolutely nothing- not sex, menstruation, the content of clothing fabric, diet- could fall outside the scope of their covenant relationship. And so in principle it is with us under the new covenant. Such a relationship also precludes the worship of *any* other God. Moses said that God had made a covenant with every member

of Israel " lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away& to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall" (Dt. 29:14-18). The height of the demand, the extent of the implication of being in covenant with God ought to preclude the possibility of worshipping anything else. The covenant we have entered has constant and binding claims upon our loyalty. This is the implication of the promises to Abraham which form the basis of that covenant.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Isa 1

Israel were to see themselves as in the suffering servant, as spiritual Israel are to see themselves as in Christ. He was oppressed, as Israel at that time were being oppressed by Assyria. As they were covered in wounds and spiritual sickness (Is. 1:5,6), so the suffering servant bore their diseases and rose again in salvation victory. Thus not even our sins stop the Lord Jesus from being able to feel an identity with us; and we should treat sinners likewise.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-2Witnessing_For_Christ.html

Act 27

The legalists taught that unless believers kept the circumcision laws, "ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). The very same Greek phrase is used by Paul when he calls out in urgency during the storm: "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Surely Luke's record is making a connection; the legalists taught that it was time to quit the rest of the community unless they got their way, for the sake of their eternal future; and Paul responds by teaching that our salvation depends upon us pulling together against the desperate situation we find ourselves in. It's as if the salvation of Christ's body depends upon it staying together. As time went on in the first century, the gap between the Jewish and Gentile elements, the right and the left wing, the legalists and the libertines, got ever wider. The tension got stronger. But nobody won. The Jewish element returned to the Law, and forgot all about the saving grace of Jesus. The Gentile element mixed even more with the world and its philosophies, and forgot the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. They ended up formulating blasphemous doctrines like the trinity, which nobody with any awareness of the Jewish foundation of the Father and Son could possibly have entertained. And so the faith was lost, until it was revived again in those groups who again interpreted Christianity in terms of "the hope of Israel". And so with us, those villages which have believers in them who won't reconcile with each other will one day have no believers in them. For love's sake, brethren, for the sake of the Lord and His cross, "be ye reconciled". Give and take from each other. Try to see yourselves from outside yourselves, realise where your tendency is, to the right or to the left. So much of the NT letter writing is designed to gender unity between these different factions. We should approach these letters seeking for counsel for ourselves. We must appreciate and apply our understanding that there is but One Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:5).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-2-1Division_In_The_Church.htm

May 13

Dt. 30

In Romans, Paul comments that truly Israel have already heard the essence of the Gospel we preach, in that the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach (Rom. 10:8). He quotes here from Dt. 30:12: For this command [to be obedient- or, as Paul interprets it, the word of the Gospel]...is it not far from thee [cp. how God is not far from anybody, Acts 17:27]. It is not in heaven above, that thou shouldst say, Who will ascend for us into heaven, and bring it to us, that we may *hear and do it*? (Dt. 30:12 LXX). As Moses spoke these words on the last day of his life, he was at the foot of Nebo, which he ascended for his final meeting with God. He is surely alluding to the way in which he had ascended to heaven before in ascending to God on Sinai, fulfilling Israel's wish that he should bring God's word to them rather than God Himself speak with them. He had returned bringing God's word to them, to which they had agreed they would hear and do. Earlier, in Deut 5:27, Moses had reminded the people how they had said: Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will *hear it, and do it*. Now he is telling them that actually the word he had brought to them needn't have been brought to them as in essence it was within their hearts. It is for exactly this reason that Paul could reason elsewhere in Romans that the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the Law, although they don't know the letter of the Law. And the same principle is found in 1 Thess. 4:9: As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves [i.e. from within yourselves?] are taught of God to love one another. This is rather like how the Gentiles were not written unto and yet they knew from their conscience the essential spirit of the Mosaic Law. So, let God's word touch your heart this day!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/6.htm>

Isa 2

In Christ, the valleys are to be lifted up, and the mountains made low, thus creating a plain. I read this as meaning that those with too low a view of themselves are to be lifted up, and the heights of human pride brought down. The overconfident and underconfident alike are to be levelled so that they can be a path for the Lord's glory. Made low in Is. 40:4 is surely in the spirit of Is. 2:11, which predicts that in the day of judgment, the lofty looks of man shall be humbled [s.w. made low], and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down. The experience of condemnation in the coming day of the Lord will mean that the proud and lofty will be brought low (Is. 2:12,17; 5:15). In fact, Isaiah is full of references to the proud being made low by judgment- the same Hebrew word is common: Is. 10:33; 13:11; 25:11; 26:5. Perhaps Paul had this in mind when he said that our preaching is a bringing down of every high thing that is exalted against God (2 Cor. 10:5). Our message is basically that we must be humbled one way or the other- either by our repentance and acceptance of the Gospel today, or through the experience of condemnation at the day of judgment. We're calling people to humility. And we must ask whether the content and style of our preaching really does that.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

Act 28

A deeper sense of the presence of Jesus, a feeling for who He was and is, a being with Him, will make us bold in preaching. Even Paul found it hard; he asked others to pray for him, that he would preach "boldly" [s.w.] as he ought to (Eph. 6:19); and their prayers were heard, for in his imprisonment during which he wrote Ephesians, he preached boldly (Acts 28:31 s.w.);

indeed, boldness characterised his whole life (Phil. 1:20 s.w.). In passing, we note how Paul felt spiritually weaker than he was; he felt not bold, when he was bold; and we see how the admission of weakness to others and their prayers for it can grant us the victory we seek. The point is, who the Lord is, we are. Or, we must be. If He was bold, if He was apt to teach and patient, so must we be; indeed, so are we, if we are truly in Him. Likewise, all the Father is, we are to manifest if we bear His Name.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-4boldness_in_witness.htm

May 14

Dt. 31

A few hours before the death of Moses, he had been telling Israel: " While I am yet alive with you this day (for a few more hours), ye have been rebellious against Yahweh; and how much more after my death?" (Dt. 31:27). Earlier that same day the Angel had told him: " Thou shalt *lie down* (mg.) with thy fathers (cp. the Angel lying him down in the grave)...and this people will *rise up* (i.e. immediately after his death), and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land" (Dt. 31:16). No wonder this was ringing in Moses' ears as he came to his death. Yet he triumphed in the fact that a minority would not give way. *His very last words* were a confident exaltation that ultimately Israel would overcome their temptations, the influence and idols of the surrounding world. But he knew that the majority of them would spiritually fall because of these things. Therefore he was looking forward to the minority in Israel who would gloriously overcome, who would come to the Kingdom, the land of corn and wine, when the heavens would drop dew. This is clearly the language of Ps. 72 and Isaiah about the future Kingdom. Moses met death with the vision of the faithful minority in the Kingdom, in the promised land, having overcome all their besetting temptations. And the Lord Jesus died with exactly that same vision (Ps. 22:22-31; 69: 30-36).

What an end. Out of weakness, such weakness, he was made strong. His temperamental faith, with its flashes of devotion, turned into a solid rock, a real ongoing relationship with a loving Father. *Every one* of his human relationships had failed: with his natural brother and sister, with his wife, with his mother, with his adopted mother, with his people. But finally that lonely man found his rest in Yahweh, Israel's God, he came to know Him as his friend and saviour. No wonder he is held up, by way of allusion throughout the New Testament, as both our example and a superb type of our Lord Jesus. Israel mourned for Moses, but it is emphasized that their weeping came to an end (Dt. 34:8). This is one of the most tragic things about the whole record of the death of Moses. They rose up, and forgot his love (Dt. 31:16,27). And what of us?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-3-3Death_Of_Moses.htm

Isa 3, 4

Our judge is also the counsel for our defence. "The Lord standeth up to plead, and (also) standeth up to judge his people" (Is. 3:13); even though He is also the witness against them (Mal. 3:5). David understood this when he asked that God would "judge [RV "give sentence"] between me and thee, and see [i.e. be the witness], and plead my cause [i.e. be the advocate]" (1 Sam. 24:15). These are Old Testament anticipations of the Lord Jesus as witness, advocate and judge.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

Col 1

The Lord Jesus works through men like us (Heb. 13:21), He comes and preaches to men through those who preach Him (Eph. 2:17; 4:21). He works in the lives of His people so that they witness about Him to others (Col. 1:29), strengthening those who preach Him (2 Tim. 4:17 and often in the Acts record), with them in their witness to the end of the world, figuratively and geographically (Mt. 28:20), working with the preachers (Mk. 16:20), and by their preaching, He reveals Himself to men (Eph. 1:7-9), taking hold of them by the Gospel (Phil. 3:12). He is like the boy who brings the ship's line to shore (AV " forerunner" , Heb. 6:20), and then guides the ship to dock; or, to use a different figure, the author (beginner) and developer of our faith (Heb. 12:3).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-7The_Spirit_Of_Jesus.htm

May 15

Dt. 32

Moses was pleading with Israel to " choose life" , not with the passivity which may appear from our armchair reading of passages like Dt. 32. I wonder if he wasn't screaming this to them, breaking down in the climax of logic and passion which resulted in that appeal. Yet he knew that the majority of Israel would not choose life. When he appeals to them to choose obedience he is therefore thinking of the minority who would respond. Our Lord Jesus, with his knowledge of human nature, must have sensed that so many of those called into his new covenant would also turn away; he must have known that only a minority of Israel would choose the life which he offered. Yet like Moses he doubtless concentrated his thoughts on the minority who would respond. Moses spoke Deuteronomy without notes. It was no reading of a carefully prepared paper. All these things were in his heart; their proneness to failure, the coming of judgement for sin, his knowledge of their future apostasy. Enter into the *passion* of it all. The man who was willing to give his eternal life for them, about to die for the sake of their provocation- singing a final song to them, giving a final speech, which showed that he knew perfectly well that they would turn away from what he was trying to do for them, and therefore the majority of them would not be saved. As he came to the end of his speech, he seems to have sensed they didn't grasp the reality of it all: It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life (Dt. 32:47); and thus his speech rises to a crescendo of intensity of pleading with them, after the pattern of the Lord.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-3-1Themes_Of_Moses_In_Deuteronomy.htm

Isa 5

There are many passages where God emphasizes the essential unity of Israel and Judah through the device of parallelism.

" For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts

is the house of *Israel*,

and the men of *Judah*

His pleasant plant" (Is. 5:7).

By Judah and Israel working together, the whole people of God could have brought forth spiritual fruit: Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out the corn & I will set a rider on Ephraim. Judah shall plow, Jacob [i.e. Ephraim, the 10 tribes] shall break his clods. Sow to yourselves in righteousness & break up your fallow ground (Hos. 10:11,12 RV). Unity with our brethren will likewise be fruitful.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

Col 2

After baptism we should "live in *new-ness* of life" (Rom. 6:4), serving Him in "newness of spirit (mind)" (Rom. 7:6). The spiritual life, the mind-life that we now share with Him is a life that is ever being made new. This *new-ness* of mind and living is the very antithesis of the life of spiritual boredom which some complain of. The Lord Jesus is seeking to merge our lives with His eternal, ever-new life; this was the process which began at baptism. There is therefore a sense in which baptism is an ongoing experience. As we die to various aspects of the flesh, so we come alive to spiritual life in those areas; we thereby live in a *new-ness* of life. As we received Christ Jesus as Lord at baptism, so we *live* daily in Him; our baptism experience is lived out throughout daily life (Col. 2:6). Thus Paul spoke of how he died daily so that he might share in the Lord's resurrection life (1 Cor. 15:31).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

May 16

Dt. 33, 34

Moses prophesied that Ephraim would push the people [Gentile inhabitants of the land] together to the ends of the earth / land (Dt. 33:17). And yet Hos. 7:8 cp. Ps. 106:34-36 criticise Ephraim for *failing* to push the people out of the land. Moses' prophecies about the tribes sound like predictions; but they were actually commands which those tribes had the freewill to obey or not. So much potential has been enabled for us each day- will we rise up to it?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

Isa 6

Preaching is made powerful by humility, and recognition of personal sin. Isaiah realised his unworthiness: "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips". He felt he was going to be condemned. But then the Angel comforted him: "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged". And then immediately he offered to go on a preaching mission to Israel: "Here am I, send me" (Is. 6:5-8). This incident is full of allusion to the sending of an equally hesitant Moses:

Moses

God appears in the burning bush

Moses is reluctant to bear God's word because I am a man of uncircumcised lips

Whom shall I send & who will go? (Ex. 3:8,9)

Moses willing to go (Ex. 3:4)

Isaiah

God appears among the seraphim, the burning ones

Isaiah felt the same- a man of unclean lips

Ditto (Is. 6:8,9)

Here am I, send me

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

Col 3, 4

If the first century converts were seriously expected to learn the Gospel of Mark, and their elders (e.g. James, Peter, John and Paul) all set them this example (*regardless* of their intellectual background)- what of us today? "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16) may well be an allusion to the tradition of learning the Gospel of Mark. How can it *richly* dwell in us if we do not daily meditate upon those inspired records?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-6-3-4Nature_Of_Gospel_Records.htm

May 17

Josh. 1

Joshua didn't give the people rest (Heb. 4:8); but he said he had (Josh. 22:4). He failed to fulfil the potential of Josh. 1:13-15- that *he* would lead the people to rest. The Messianic Kingdom could, perhaps, have come through Joshua-Jesus; but both Joshua and Israel would not. Dt. 1:38 states clearly that Joshua & he shall cause Israel to inherit [s.w. possess] the land. Yet by the end of Joshua's life, Israel were not inheriting the land in totality. He didn't live up to his potential. Note, in passing, that God's prophecy here was conditional, although no condition is actually stated at the time. God's opening commission to Joshua was that the people were to possess the whole land promised to Abraham, right up to the Euphrates (Josh. 1:4). But Joshua ended up drawing up the borders of the land far smaller than these; he didn't even seek to subdue the territory up to the Euphrates, even though God had promised him potential success and even commanded him to do so. Joshua was to divide up the whole land promised to Abraham, amongst the tribes of Israel (Josh. 1:6). And yet in the extensive descriptions of Joshua dividing up the land, we don't find him dividing up that whole territory up to the Euphrates. He seems to have lacked that vision, and fallen into the mire of minimalism, just content with a utilitarian, small scale conquest, rather than seeing the bigger picture of the potential Kingdom which God wanted to give His people.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-10Joshua_Potential_Messiah.htm

Isa 7

" The pride that apes humility" says all that is necessary. We can appear to be humble, and by doing so actually express our pride. The point has been made elsewhere that a brother may say to a sister full of praise for his Bible study: " It was nothing really, no, not that good" . But if another sister says to him: " I thought your Bible study was nothing really, not much good at all" ; how does he react? Did he *really* mean his 'humble' words to his admirer? Ahaz is one of many Biblical examples of this kind of false humility. He refused to ask a sign of Yahweh, when invited to, lest he be like apostate Israel in the wilderness, and tempt Yahweh (Is. 7:12 cp. Dt. 6:16). But this was actually a 'wearying' of God, and he was given a sign relating to his condemnation (Is. 7:12,13).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-7Humility_And_Bible_reading.htm

1 Thess. 1, 2

There is within the Bible repeated emphasis on the fact that we are *each* members of the one body, and as such have a definite *responsibility* for each other. We all have more influence on each other than we may think. Quite naturally, the Thessalonians imitated the ecclesias of Judaea and also Paul personally (1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14). And in turn, they became models to all the believers in Macedonia (1 Thess. 1:7).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

May 18

Josh. 2

When Solomon describes the painted lips of his lover as being like a thread of scarlet (Song of Solomon 4:3), he uses two Hebrew words which only occur together in Josh. 2:18, describing how the Gentile harlot Rahab hung the scarlet thread outside her home in order to bring about the salvation of her mother and her family. Solomon wanted to justify his Egyptian girlfriend by comparing her to Gentile Rahab. And such sophistry goes on at the beginning of every relationship that leads to a marriage out of the Faith.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-3-2The_Song_Of_Solomon.htm

Isa 8

The prophets were trying to share the feelings and positions of a God *so* vastly different to the imaginations and understandings of His very own people. The nervous stress of this, the psychological pressure, cant be underestimated. And we are asked to share the spirit / mind / disposition of those prophets. Not only was God on the side of Israel s enemies; yet through all that, He somehow *was* with Israel; quite simply, God is with us, even though it is He who encamps against them too (Is. 8:9,10; 18:4). The God of Auschwitz is somehow still the God of Israel. The very torment, even torture, of understanding that was etched clearly in the prophets, and it will be in us too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-6.htm>

1 Thess. 3, 4

The Lord Jesus sheds His Spirit in the sense of an outpouring of His work and involvement in the lives of the man who has accepted the Lord as his saviour in baptism. After that act of commitment to Him, He builds us up (Col. 2:6,7; 2 Thess. 3:3-5), using other brethren to do so (1 Thess. 3:2). Every visit, every letter, the Lord graciously uses. He does, of course, work Himself on the mind of men, but never totally separate from the word of the Spirit, and never forcing a man against his own will. He succours us in temptation (Heb. 2:18; 2 Pet. 2:9), and guides our experiences so that we grow in true love for each other (1 Thess. 3:12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-7The_Spirit_Of_Jesus.htm

May 19

Josh. 3, 4

Joshua was very good at obedience to clear commandments (Josh. 4:10,17; 8:27; 10:40). But when he had to articulate his faith in God in unexpected situations, e.g. when the ambassadors from Gibeon arrived, or when the first attack on Ai failed, he seems to have performed poorly. Legalistic obedience is no use in those cases when principles need to be applied. Josh. 5:13,14 can be read as a rebuke of Joshua, wanting to boil everything down to black and white, wanting to see God as either personally for him or against him; when the essence is to seek to discern and do Gods will. He very strictly adhered to Gods commandments with legalistic obedience, e.g., about how to approach and deal with Jericho, or how to cross the flooded Jordan and build an altar; and time and again, we read in Joshua of how he strictly relayed and obeyed the Divine commandments given by Moses (Josh. 8:31,33,35; 11:12,15,20; 14:2,5; 17:4; 21:2,8). Yet as with any literalistic or legally minded person, it was hard for Joshua to apply the principles behind the laws to situations which werent specifically addressed by Divine revelation, where legalistic obedience wasn't what was required.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-9-2Legalistic_Obedience.htm

Isa 9

The Hebrew word translated "zeal" in the context of God's zeal for us (Is. 9:7) really means the jealousy which flares up in a man for a woman (the same word is in Num. 5:14,15; Prov. 6:34; Song 8:6 etc.). That jealousy burning like fire (Ps. 79:5) is His passion for us His people. He is a jealous God in His zeal for us; and therefore any other relationships cannot be contemplated by us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

1 Thess. 5

It was accepted in Judaism, as well as in many other contemporary religions, that faithful saints [e.g. the patriarchs, Moses, the prophets etc, in Judaism's case] could intercede for the people. Yet in the New Testament, *all* believers are urged to intercede for each other, even to the point of seeking to gain forgiveness for others' sins (1 Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18; James

5:15). They were *all* to do this vital work. The radical nature of this can easily be overlooked by us, reading from this distance.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

May 20

Josh. 5, 6

Jesus told the crowd in Jn. 6 that the true manna was His flesh, which He was to give for the life of the world. Some have supposed from Josh. 5:10-12 cp. Ex. 16:35 that the manna fell for the first time on the eve of the Passover, thus adding even more poignancy to the Lords equation of the manna with His death. Yet all this painstaking attempt to re-focus the crowds on the spiritual rather than the literal, salvation through His death rather than an immediate benefit for them, patient eating / sharing in His sufferings rather than eternity here and now& all this went so tragically unheeded. And it does to this day.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-17.htm>

Isa 10

In the context of the Assyrian invasion, Is. 10:20-23 prophesied that the remnant of Israel , those who survive it, will trust in the Lord alone and in truth , i.e. in covenant relationship with Him. It seems that all others of natural Israel will perish (as in Is. 4:2-4). This language of the remnant returning unto the Lord is quoted in Rom. 9:23 about the repentance of the Jewish people and their turning to Christ. Israel were intended to repent because of Sennacherib s invasion (Is. 37:31,32), and then the consumption of Gods plan could have happened. But the prophecy has been reinterpreted with reference to Israel in the last days, repenting finally as the result of the latter day Assyrian invasion. Isaiah 10 speaks of how Israel s affliction by Assyria leads them to repentance; a remnant shall return& unto the mighty God (Is. 10:21)- and the mighty God has just been defined in Is. 9:6 as a title for the Lord Jesus. This will be a result of God using the Assyrian invader to make a consumption& in the midst of all the land of Israel (Is. 10:23). The yoke of Assyria shall be destroyed because of the anointing (Is. 10:27)- i.e. the coming of Christ, the anointed one, in response to the remnant returning unto Him. Thus any signs of Israel's repentance, and every sign that the latter day Assyrian is going to dominate Israel, is a sign of the Lord's return. He may soon come- even today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/15Last_Days_Repentance_Of_Israel.htm

2 Thess. 1, 2

Paul prays that “every desire of goodness” which there is in the Thessalonians will be fulfilled (2 Thess. 1:11 RV). He assumed they had such spiritual ambition, and wanted to see it realized. Spiritual ambition means that we will desire to do some things which we can't physically fulfil- and yet they will be counted to us. Abraham is spoken of as having offered up Isaac- his intention was counted as the act. And Prov. 19:22 RV appropriately comments: “The desire of a man is the measure of his kindness”. It is all accepted according to what a man has, not what he has not.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

May 21

Josh. 7

If Canaan is seen to represent the Kingdom, the things which are stopping us entering the Kingdom are our sins. In prospect, Jesus, the antitype of the great Angel which lead Israel into the land and drove out the enemies in prospect, has vanquished all our sins. When Israel sinned, the help the Angels were giving Israel to help them possess what they had already prepared for them, was taken away. Thus with the first attack on Ai, the Angels had in prospect driven out the people of Ai, but the realisation of that was conditional on Israel's obedience. "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I (God manifested through the Angel) be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you"(Josh. 7:12). It is perhaps in this context of the Angel going before the people that we read concerning Caleb that "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb. . because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Josh. 14:14)- i. e. he zealously followed the Angel which went before him, and therefore he obtained his inheritance which in prospect the Angel had prepared for him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels6.htm>

Isa 11

As the stone of Daniel 2:44 spreads world-wide, it follows that the conditions of the Kingdom such as fertile lands, lack of pain in childbearing etc., will also spread gradually and selectively on earth after Christ's return. " They shall not hurt nor destroy in *all my holy mountain*" , which will spread world-wide (Is.11:9). These conditions will therefore spread, in accordance with the acceptance of the Gospel. The animals will not fight each other in the " holy mountain" (Is.11:7-9); but Ezekiel's prophecies teach that it will be possible to try to offer a mauled animal in the Millennium. Such an animal would therefore have come from the areas which are not yet part of the " holy mountain" . Whatever the reality, let's think of the Kingdom today!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/29.htm>

2 Thess. 3

" ...that ye *study* (be ambitious) to be quiet, and to do your own business...that ye may *walk* honestly toward them that are without" (1 Thess. 4:11,12). " That ye *study* (be ambitious) to be *quiet*" presents a powerful opposition of ideas; to have heroic ambition to be quiet; to be self-controlled, living a blameless spiritual life in everyday things (this is what the idiom of " walk" refers to). In 2 Thess. 3:12,13, Paul returns to this idea: He tells them once again to live a *quiet* life, and says in that context: " Be not weary in (such) well doing" . Yet he asks them in 1 Thess. 4:11 to be ambitious to be quiet. Surely he is encouraging them not to be weary in living a life of such ambition. And this is not the only reference to ambition in Thessalonians. Paul praises them for the brotherly love which they undoubtedly had. But he doesn't just say 'Keep it up!'. He exhorts them to increase in it, more and more (1 Thess. 4:10).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

May 22

Josh. 8

God told Israel to totally destroy the spoil from the cities they attacked. But when they failed to do this with Jericho, God told them that with Ai, the next city on the agenda, they were allowed to keep the spoil (Josh. 8:2); even though Dt. 20:14-16 said that this was how they should treat their distant enemies, but *not* cities like Ai which were part of their inheritance. This was an undoubted concession to human weakness. The same concession to human weakness applied to other cities apart from Ai; it became a general policy that " all the spoil of these cities...the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves" ; and yet following straight on from this we are told that Joshua " left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses" (Josh. 11:14,15). God accepted those concessions to human weakness, this living on a lower level, as total obedience. The grace of all this is marvellous.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Isa 12

With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation (Is. 12:3) is applied by the Lord to the present experience of the believer in Him (Jn. 4:14; 7:38). But Isaiah 12 continues to explain how the joy of that experience will lead to men saying: The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation [as He was for Israel at the Red Sea, cp. our baptism experience]...Praise the Lord, proclaim his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. The exaltation of the Yahweh Name, the wonder of it, the sheer height of who Yahweh is, these things and our personal part in them is an unending imperative to witness these things world-wide. Men did not confess Jesus to others, despite nominally believing in Him, because they did not love the concept of the glory of God (Jn. 12:43 RV). To perceive His glory, the wonder of it all, leads to inevitable witness to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/5-3light_of_the_world.htm

1 Tim. 1-3

Paul saw in his conversion a pattern for all those who would afterwards believe (1 Tim. 1:16). Having said that he was "chief" of the tribe of sinners, Paul goes straight on to say that this "was so that in me *as chief* might Jesus Christ shew forth *all* his longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should later believe on him" (1 Tim. 1:15,16 RV). This sounds as if Paul realized that he was being set up as the chief, supreme example to us; a template for each of us, of forgiveness and zealous response to that forgiveness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-1Conversion_Of_Paul.htm

May 23

Josh. 9

Joshua like many modern Christians was very prone to being influenced by peer pressure and the views and expectations of others, especially in these situations. He told Israel theyd done a good job and driven out all the tribes- when they were still worshipping idols, and hadnt driven out all the tribes. Only in his deathbed speech did he face up to the reality of their sinfulness. Ex. 32:17,18 is another example of Joshua s genuine naievity- thinking that Israel were far stronger than they were. He mistook the sound of their idolatrous partying for the sound of a battle; and Moses almost rebukes him for his naievity. He allowed the leaders of Israel to lead him into wrong decisions about the initial attack on Ai, and also into being deceived by the Gibeonites. And yet as a younger man, he had boldly stood up to the peer pressure of the princes of Israel in faithfully declaring that Israel could and should go up into Canaan; when the other princes must have put huge pressure upon him to agree with them. He is described as maintaining another spiritto theirs (Num. 14:24). The resolution of youth seems to have been somewhat lost as he grew older.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-9-3Peer_Pressure.htm

Isa 13

The day of the Lord will result in the wicked being " in pain as of a woman that travaileth" (Is. 13:8; 1 Thess. 5:3). The Lord seems to have alluded to this when He spoke of how the faithful just before His coming would be like a woman in travail, with the subsequent joy on delivery matching the elation of acceptance at Christ's return (Jn. 16:21). So, it's travail- or travail, especially in the last days. If we choose the way of the flesh, it will be travail for nothing, bringing forth in vain (this is seen as a characteristic of all worldly life in Is. 65:23). We either cut off the flesh now (in spiritual circumcision), or God will cut us off. This point was made when the rite of circumcision was first given: " The uncircumcised [un-cut off] man...shall be cut off" (Gen. 17:14).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-9The_Logic_Of_Endurance.htm

1 Tim. 4, 5

Paul taught Timothy that by nourishing others with good teaching, he would himself be "nourished up in the words of faith" (1 Tim. 4:6). Caring for others on whatever level is what stimulates an upward spiral in our personal spiritual growth.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm

May 24

Josh. 10

Circumstances repeat in our lives. As Joshua had been told to be strong good courage in order to take the land, so he had to tell others (Josh. 10:25). As God charged him to be courageous and obedient to the book of the Law, so Joshua on his deathbed charged his people (Josh. 1:7,8 cp. 23:6). Joshua had faithfully followed, and now he became the leader who was to be faithfully followed. Likewise, he led the Israelites in battle whilst Moses stood on the hill with arms uplifted in prayer for his success. And in capturing Ai, it was Joshuas turn to stand on a hill with arms uplifted [also in prayer?] whilst Israel fought. However, Joshua seems to have somehow gotten out of synch with the Angel when he meets Him in Josh. 5:14 and asks

Him whether He is for or against Israel. We must walk in step with the Spirit / Angel in our lives; and yet no matter how much we've walked in step with Him, we can always allow pressure of circumstances to let us fall out of step with Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-10Joshua_Potential_Messiah.htm

Isa 14

The various world empires mentioned in the Bible are described in the language of the Kingdom of God; they are anti-Kingdoms of God. Take Babylon:

Babylon	The Kingdom of God
" The golden city" (Is. 14:4) with a thick, embellished wall (Jer. 51:58); springs and rivers within her (Jer. 51:36)	The description of the new Jerusalem in Rev. 21,22 and its wall, foundations etc. seems an allusion to the city of Babylon; as if to shew that Babylon was a fake city of God.
" He that ruled the nations" with an iron rod " ...that did shake kingdoms" (Is. 14:6,16)	Cp. King Jesus (Ps. 110:2; Rev. 19:15)
The morning star (Is. 14:12)	Rev. 22:16
Desired to be exalted above the Angels in Heaven (Is. 14:13)	As Christ was (Heb. 1, 2)

The world around us today poses as a fake Kingdom of God, just as Babylon did. But it isn't. We have to choose between the true Kingdom and the fake one.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/a3The_12th_Imam.htm

1 Tim. 6

We either depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12), or we depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19, 22; 1 Tim. 6:5). We're always moving in one direction or the other.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm

May 25

Josh. 11

Samson went to Gaza conscious that his people had failed to drive out the tribes (Josh. 11:22). Judah had captured it in Joshua's strength (1:18), but had let the Philistines return. So Samson chose Gaza from spiritual motives; and yet he schemed out his plan to enable him to gratify his flesh.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-5Samson_In_Gaza.htm

Isa 15

We must appeal to men with conviction, as Isaiah's heart cried out for Moab like a young heifer about to be slaughtered, feeling for them in what would come upon them, and

desperately appealing for their repentance. Because the Moabites would cry out and their voice would be heard, *my* heart shall cry out for Moab(Is. 15:4,5,8). As the Lord Jesus is a representative Saviour, we too must feel the judgment that is to come upon others, and in that sense cry out for them as they will cry out.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/14-3personal_pleading_of_the_prophet.htm

2 Tim. 1

Our overall way of life, rather than specific acts of righteousness, is what can be the motive force in overcoming the flesh. Through the spirit- the spiritual way of life- we mortify the flesh (Rom. 8:13). Through the Spirit we keep the truth (2 Tim. 1:14). This doesn't mean that somehow God's Spirit power in a miraculous sense makes us hold on. What it surely means is that if we live the Spiritual way of life, this will of itself enable us to keep walking in the true way. It's not that the temptations won't arise; but our way of life will be such that they no longer have so much power. The temptation to go drinking with the village boys on Friday night is so much less if every Friday, as part of your way of life, you go to study the Bible with someone.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

May 26

Josh. 12

Israel finally entered the land under Joshua, a clear type of the Lord Jesus. The LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was *noised* throughout all the country (Josh 6:27), the *eretz*, or earth, a term which usually refers to the land promised to Abraham. Clearly the whole planet didn't know Joshua had invaded Canaan. Many times in Joshua and Judges we read of the people of the *eretz*: For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the *land* [*eretz*] shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the *earth* [*eretz*] (Jos 7:9). Here the Israelites feared being cut off from their place in the *land*. They perceived the world / earth to them as the land where their enemies lived. In Josh. 12:1,7 we meet the kings of the earth , i.e. of the land, and this must surely be the basis of how we are to understand the references to the kings of the earth in Revelation. We are seeing before our eyes the rulers of the land promised to Abraham confederating against Israel! Truly the last days are upon us; and today may be our last.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/d3.htm>

Isa 16

Appreciating that prayer is so much " in the spirit" , we can better grasp why prayer is portrayed as a struggle. Moab would pray in the time of his judgment; " but he shall not prevail" (Is. 16:12), as if the prayer process was a struggle. Jacob, by contrast, struggled with the Angel in prayer and prevailed (Hos. 12:2-4). The Romans were to strive together with Paul in prayer (Rom. 15:30); the Lord's prayers in Gethsemane were a resisting / struggling unto the point of sweating blood (Heb. 12:2). " I would that ye knew what great conflict I have [RV how greatly I strive / struggle] for you...that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding" is parallel to "

We do not cease to pray for you... that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 2:1 cp. 1:9,10). Paul's conflict / struggle for them was his prayer for them. Epaphras likewise was always striving for you in his prayers (Col. 4:12 RV). Our groanings, our struggling in prayer, is transferred to God by the Lord Jesus groaning also, but with groanings far deeper and more fervently powerful than ours (Rom. 8:22,23 cp. 26). Our prayers are to give the Father no "rest" (Is. 62:7), no cessation from violent warfare (Strong).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2-3struggle_of_prayer.htm

2 Tim. 2

In our daily weakness, remember that Paul too was weak at times. "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6) seems to be a flash of unspirituality. For later, Paul realizes that he may be condemned if he doesn't preach the Gospel; he realized that he perhaps *wasn't* free of his duty of preaching. Yet for all his "from henceforth I go unto the Gentiles", Paul *still* preached to the Jews (Acts 18:8; 19:8); which would suggest these words were said in temper and perhaps unwisdom. He himself seems to recognize this when he wrote to Timothy at the very end of his life of how we must with meekness instruct those who oppose themselves (2 Tim. 2:25), whereas his own response to those who "opposed themselves" (Acts 18:6) had been to say, without meekness, that he was never going to 'instruct' Jews ever again.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-2-2Weakness_Of_Paul.htm

May 27

Josh. 13

The Levites had no material inheritance because "the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel...are his inheritance...the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance" (Josh. 13:14,33). Notice how "the Lord God" is put for what is sacrificed to Him. His very existence is an imperative to sacrifice to Him, despising all material advantage in doing so. Job comments that to make gold our hope and wealth our confidence is to deny the God that is above (Job 31:24,28). To trust in material wealth is effectively to proclaim ourselves atheists.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-1Practicing_The_Presence_Of_God.htm

Isa 17, 18

Both vine and fig trees are used as symbols of Israel. It seems likely that the Lord had in mind the figure of Is. 18:5 in mind when constructing His parable of the fig tree. Here we are told that the vine must be pruned and some branches cut down (RV)- exactly the language of trial and tribulation which Jesus uses in Jn. 15. The result of this will be that the flower becometh a ripening grape (RV)- i.e. spiritual fruit is brought forth by tribulation (the same figure is found in Is. 17:6-8). And out of all this, a present shall be brought unto the Lord of Hosts of a people scattered and peeled...whose land the rivers [Babylon, Assyria, in Isaiah's symbology] have spoiled, to the place of the Name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion (Is. 18:7). The fruit on the vine corresponds with the repentant latter day remnant of Israel; and

the pruning of that vine to their sufferings during the final tribulation. The quicker we help Israel to repent, the quicker the Lord will be back.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/14.htm>

2 Tim. 3, 4

A person can learn the theory of God's truth but never come to acknowledge it- i.e. to repent and live the life of the truth (2 Tim. 3:7), i.e. being transparent before God and brutally honest with oneself. Jer. 5:1 says that "if ye can find a man...that seeketh the truth...I will pardon it". To seek truth is therefore to repent. Those moments of realization of our sinfulness, of accurately perceiving the gap between the personas we act out and the real, Christ-self within us- in those moments, we have come to truth. And this is the repentance that leads to true, authentic pardon.

It does at times appear impossible to live a truthful life in a world that is so essentially untruthful and self-deceptive. In Greek thought, and especially that of Plato, there was the idea that all on earth was untrue, but there was another, Heavenly world of truth and beauty. John's letters especially bring out that this is a *wrong* view. We, here and now on earth, can live in truth. To "walk in truth" means living a life according to the principles of Jesus, who was *the* truth to us, here in this dirty world of ours. Paul could say that Timothy had fully known his "purpose" (2 Tim. 3:10). The Greek *prothesis* is the same used in the New Testament about the shewbread- the bread openly on display before God. Paul is saying that his essential and real self was transparent, openly shown to both God and man. To say 'You've fully known how open and transparent I am' is really quite something. Who Paul showed himself to be was who he really was.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-4the_truth_of_christ.htm

May 28

Josh. 14

Examples of spiritual ambition are inspirational; just as soldiers inspire each other by their acts of bravery. Achsah followed her father Caleb's spiritual ambition in specifically asking for an inheritance in the Kingdom (Josh. 14:12; 15:18); and this in turn inspired another woman to ask for an inheritance soon afterwards (Josh. 17:4). And so it ought to be in any healthy congregation of believers.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

Isa 19

The repentance of Egypt will be because "the Lord shall smite Egypt...and they shall return to the Lord" (Is. 19:18-22). This is the whole purpose of the terrible judgments God will bring upon the earth in the last days- to bring people to Him. Much as we struggle with the problem of large scale evil, both in our personal lives and in the world, in the end God means to teach us something out of it, and to bring us to Him, to do us good in our latter end.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_1.htm

Tit 1-3

The spiritual life renews (Tit. 3:5), giving us that *newness* of life, that ongoing baptism and resurrection experience, which Rom. 6:4 promises. This way of life, as it develops, creates its own momentum for further change. If we walk in the spirit (another way of describing the spiritual 'way of life') we will not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

May 29

Josh. 15

Dan's apostasy is suggested by the way in which he is omitted from the tribes of the new Israel in Rev. 7. Zorah, Samson's home town, was originally Judah's inheritance (Josh. 15:33-36), but they spurned it, and passed it to Dan (Josh. 19:41), who also weren't interested; for they migrated to the north and took over the land belonging to the less warlike Sidonians (Jud. 18:2,7-10). Their selfishness is reflected by the way they chide with him: "What is this that thou hast done *unto us*?" (15:11). "They had become reconciled to the dominion of sin since it did not appear to do much harm. They could still grow their crops etc." .

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-1Character_Study_Of_Samson.htm

Isa 20, 21

The rejected will have the feeling of a desire to escape but having no place to run (Heb. 2:3, quoting Is. 20:6 concerning the inability of men to escape from the approach of the invincible Assyrian army). The rejected will see that the Lord is coming against them with an army much stronger than theirs, and they have missed the chance to make peace (Lk. 14:31). The reality of rejection, the future we may miss, needs to be held before the mind of every God fearing person.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-8Parables_Of_Judgment.htm

Phm

Philemon owed his salvation to Paul's preaching, and was therefore eternally obligated to him (Philemon 19). If we don't preach to people, they will not be saved; if we do, we can play our part in leading them to eternal life. It's a very motivational idea- that so much , even others' eternity, has in some way been delegated to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-3power_of_preaching.htm

May 30

Josh. 16

God redefined the boundaries of the land in accordance to what Israel had the strength to subdue; He made account for their weakness. Thus Ephraim were given some cities within the inheritance of Manasseh (Josh. 16:9), presumably because Manasseh wouldn't drive out

the tribes living there. And the Lord seems to have alluded to this by saying that *we* will be given cities, the number of which depends upon our zeal to possess them. God had clearly promised: Your God, he shall expel them from before you & ye *shall* possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you (Josh. 23:5). But this promise was conditional upon them making the effort, even though that condition is not specifically mentioned. Ultimately, God will enlarge all the borders of the land (Is. 26:15 RV) because Israel will finally rise up to the spiritual ambition He desires of them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-4Contemporary_Relevance_Of_Ezekiels_Temple.htm

Isa 22

The prophets weren't fax machines, computer hardware that prints out whatever message comes into it. There was a personal identification between them and the word they spoke. And that, as now, is what gives human words authenticity and power- when it is apparent that the person and his words are one. Their emotions were God's; Ezekiel even lost his wife in order for him to be able to enter more into how God felt. This was an exhausting task. No wonder they needed this psychological strengthening. The prophets weren't merely informing men ahead of time that God's judgments were coming; rather were they sharing with the people the Divine pathos, His feelings and sense of tragic rejection. The prophets were therefore not mere fax machines; their own feelings were involved in the act of transmission of God's feelings to men through words. Even despite the special psychological strengthening which they received, sometimes the whole prophetic experience seemed too much for them, as it does for us: Therefore I said, Look away from me & do not labour to comfort me for the ruin of my people (Is. 22:4). The prophets believed their message, to the point that it overcame them with grief that men wouldn't heed them. Is this how we feel at the rejection of our message? Is our testimony to Jesus really in the spirit of these prophets & ?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Heb 1, 2

Hebrews 1 can be a passage which appears to provide perhaps the strongest support for both the 'Jesus is God' and 'Jesus is not God' schools. The writer is in fact purposefully juxtaposing the language of Christ's humanity and subjection to the Father, with statements and quotations which apply the language of God to Jesus. But the emphasis is so repeatedly upon the fact that God did this to Jesus. God gave Jesus all this glory. Consider the evidence: It is God who begat Jesus (Heb. 1:5), God who told the Angels to worship Jesus (Heb. 1:6), it was "God, even your God" who anointed Jesus, i.e. made Him Christ, the anointed one (Heb. 1:9); it was God who made Jesus sit at His right hand, and makes the enemies of His Son come into subjection (Heb. 1:13); it was God who made / created Jesus, God who crowned Jesus, God who set Jesus over creation (Heb. 2:7), God who put all in subjection under Jesus (Heb. 2:8). And yet interspersed between all this emphasis- for that's what it is- upon the superiority of the Father over the Son... we find Jesus addressed as "God" (Heb. 1:8), and having Old Testament passages about God applied to Him (Heb. 1:5,6). The juxtaposition is purposeful. It is to bring out how the highly exalted position of Jesus was in fact granted to Him by 'his God', the Father, who remains the single source and giver of all exaltation, and who, to use the Lord's very own words, "is greater than [Christ]" (Jn. 14:28). He was exalted *because* He was human; and that's why we have to pass through the same pattern.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-23.htm>

May 31

Josh. 17

That a man should betray the Lord Jesus just for a bit of money is incredible- almost. But this is the iron grip of the snare of riches. And our community is littered with the spiritual wrecks of those who have likewise been snared by their pursuit of wealth, on whatever level. And Scripture brings before us so many others: Hezekiah is one of the more tragic. One reason why Israel failed to drive out the tribes, and thereby lost the Kingdom, was simply because they wanted to take tribute from them (Josh. 17:13). Ez. 7:19 defines silver and gold as Israel's stumbling block- more so than idols. They just so loved wealth.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-3The_Snare_Of_Riches.htm

Isa 23

Is. 23:1,2,4,15,18 seem to imply that if Tyre had howled in repentance and then been silent and ashamed, she would be forgotten 70 years and then become devoted to Yahweh. This never happened. Yet the 70 year period is analogous to Judah's 70 years in captivity, also without repentance- although this was what God intended. Again and again, He designs such great potentials for us, and we fail to live up to them. There are things today that He has enabled for us... will we realize them?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-3Tyre_In_Ezekiel_26.htm

Heb 3-5

Heb. 3:6 insists that holding fast the *rejoicing* of the Hope unto the end is essential for salvation. Praise isn't just for those that way inclined. It's vital for salvation. Israel fell away because they failed to keep Yahweh's principles *with joy* (Dt. 28:47). Moses in his final maturity identified this as a reason for the apostasy which he knew lay inevitably ahead of his people.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/1.htm>

June 1 Jos 18

One simple reason why Israel failed to inherit the Kingdom in the time of Joshua / Judges was that they were simply " slack" , lazy, to drive out the tribes (Josh. 18:3; the same word is used in Ex. 5:8 regarding how the Egyptians perceived them to be lazy; and also s.w. Prov. 18:9). They were happy to receive tribute from them, and to enjoy what blessings they received. They were satisficers, not men of principle or mission; not real bond slaves. And for this, God rejected them and they never really inherited the Kingdom prepared for them. Are we going to be lazy this day... or go ahead and inherit the land?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-3Redeeming_The_Time.htm

Isa 24

We tend to think that if others are hypocrites, well, I'd better ensure I'm not. But this indicates a lack of perception of the glory of God, and omits the factor of how *He* must feel at all those other peoples' hypocrisies; the glory that is intended to be given to Him, that isn't. Because of hypocritical "songs of praise" to God, Isaiah felt physically ill- "I pine away, I pine away" (Is. 24:16). The prophets felt for God, seeing things from His viewpoint. They had the spirit of Moses, who wished to see Israel in the land glorifying God, and was willing for his name to be blotted out of the book of eternal remembrance for that to happen. In that spirit, Moses even earlier could rejoice in song that "Thou wilt bring *them* in and plant *them*" (Ex. 15:17) rather than "You will bring *us* in...". The prophetic desire was to see God glorified rather than their own success. This is the spirit of the prophets. This is what led them to see the tragedy of insincerity, of indifference, of the don't care attitude.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-6.htm>

Heb 6, 7_

We must be careful not to think that our promised inheritance is *only* eternal life; it is something being personally prepared for each of us. The language of preparation seems inappropriate if our reward is only eternal life. The husbandman produces fruit which is appropriate to his labours, and so our eternal future and being will be a reflection of our labours now (Heb. 6:7). Not that salvation depends upon our works: it is the free, gracious gift of God. But the nature of our eternity will be a reflection of our present efforts.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-2Relationships_In_The_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

June 2Jos 19

The portion of the children of Judah was too much for them" (Josh. 19:9) almost implies God made an error in allocating them too much; when actually the problem was that they lacked the faith to drive out the tribes living there. Likewise " the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them" (Josh. 19:47), although actually " The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley" (Jud. 1:34). When Dan fought against Leshem, this one act of obedience is so magnified in Josh. 19:47 to sound as if in their zeal to inherit their territory they actually found they had too little land and therefore attacked Leshem. But actually it was already part of their allotted inheritance. Yet God graciously comments: " all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel" (Jud. 18:1). This God of grace is our God this day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15-3God_And_Israel.htm

Isa 25

If we know it, we will appeal to men with conviction, receiving similar motivation to preach, as Isaiah's heart cried out for Moab like a young heifer about to be slaughtered, feeling for them in what would come upon them, and desperately appealing for their repentance. Because the Moabites would cry out and their voice would be heard, " my heart shall cry out for Moab" (Is. 15:4,5,8). As the Lord Jesus is a representative Saviour, we too must feel the judgment that is to come upon others, and in that sense cry out for them as they will cry out. " Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab" (Is. 16:7)- but Isaiah, feeling for them so strongly, also howled for them; " my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab" (16:11). This level of love

inspired Jeremiah to adopt the same attitude (Jer. 48:20,31-34); he too howled for those whose howling in condemnation he prophesied (Jer. 48:31 s.w.). As Moab cried out like a three year old heifer (Jer. 48:34), so did Isaiah for them (Is. 15:5). All this was done by Isaiah and Jeremiah, knowing that Moab hated Israel (Is. 25:10) and were evidently worthy of God's condemnation. But all the same they loved them, in the spirit of Noah witnessing to the mocking world around him. Our knowledge of this world's future means that as we walk the streets and mix with men and women, our heart should cry out for them, no matter how they behave towards us, and there should be a deep seated desire for at least some of them to come to repentance and thereby avoid the judgments to come. Particularly is this true, surely, of the people and land of Israel. It ought to be impossible for us to walk its streets or meet its people without at least desiring to give them a tract or say at least something to try to help them see what lies ahead.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-10Motivation_To_Preach.htm

Heb 8, 9

As part of the priesthood, our duty is to *all* teach or communicate the word of God to each other. It was God's intention that natural Israel should obey the spirit of this, so that they would "teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord" (Heb. 8:11). That was how God intended Israel of old to fulfil this idea of being a priestly nation. The Gentile Israel has been chosen to bring forth fruit where they failed; and so we must ask if this is how we really are as a community. Where is our sense of real responsibility for each other, our sensitivity to the effect we have upon each other? Where is the *enthusiasm of communication* which Heb. 8:11 implies? Given current communication possibilities, the current plethora of online forums & magazines is indeed quite right- so long as they are communicating the real knowledge of the Lord rather than being political flagships. Discussion after Bible class, the posing of profitable questions to each other, lively correspondence columns- these are all part of it. It *isn't* something just for the academically minded. If we truly "know the Lord", we will want to communicate that relationship to others, as a Kingdom of priests!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-1-1A_Kingdom_Of_Priests.htm

June 3Jos 20, 21

Many examples of God's grace at the time of the conquest could be furnished; they are epitomized in the conclusion: "The Lord gave unto Israel all the land...and they possessed it, and dwelt therein...there stood not a man of all their enemies before them" (Josh. 21:43,44). But their enemies did stand before them, they didn't possess all the land. Yet God puts it over so positively, as if it's a story with a happy ending- when actually it's a tragedy.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15-3God_And_Israel.htm

Isa 26, 27

Noah entering the ark may be the basis of Is. 26:20: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and *shut thy doors* (cp. the ark) about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast". Not only is this verse in a latter day context; "the indignation" frequently describes the Babylonian and

Assyrian invasions of Israel, typical as they are of those of the last days (Is. 10:5,25; 13:5; Lam. 2:6; Ez. 22:31; Dan. 8:13; Zech. 1:12). As the faithful remnant were kept safe within Jerusalem at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, so in the last days it seems that the faithful will somehow be taken away. Is. 57:1 in the same Sennacherib context speaks of how the righteous are gathered (Heb.) from the evil that is to come, so that they can lay in peace upon their beds (surely an idiom) in the midst of the tribulation of invasion. According to our suggested chronology, this will happen towards the end of the three and a half year tribulation. This would fit the type of Israel in Egypt: suffering some of the plagues, and then miraculously separated from them.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/d6.htm>

Heb 10

Not assembling ourselves together is of course not a good thing. If we love our brethren, we will seek to be physically with them. There can be no doubt that we must struggle with our natural selfishness, our desire to go it alone. But is this actually what Heb. 10:25 is talking about? A glance at the context shows that forsaking the assembly is paralleled with the wilful sin which shall exclude us from God's salvation:

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith

Without wavering [going back to Judaism, according to the context in Hebrews]

Let us consider one another to provoke unto love

Not forsaking the assembly-of-ourselves

Exhorting one another

Unlike the "some" who, according to how Hebrews uses that Greek word, have turned away from Christianity

Wilful sin, with no more access to the Lord's sacrifice

Certain condemnation- "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation"

Despising the Law

Treading under foot the Son of God and reviling the blood of the covenant- what had to be done by Christians who 'repented' of their conversion and returned to the synagogue, the sort of blasphemy that Saul was making Christian converts commit.

Now are those awful things in the right hand column above really a description of someone who fervently believes in the Lord Jesus, but for whatever reason, doesn't 'make it out to meeting' on Sundays? Those terms seem to speak about a wilful rejection of the Lord Jesus. And this of course is the very background against which Hebrews was written. It was a letter to Hebrew Christians who were beginning to bow to Jewish pressure and renounce their faith in Christ, and return to Judaism. "The assembling of ourselves together" can actually be read as a noun- not a verb. Those who 'forsook' 'the assembly together of us' would then refer to those who totally rejected Christianity. The same word "forsaking" occurs in 2 Pet. 2:15, also in a Jewish context, about those who "forsake the right way". So I suggest that forsaking the

assembly refers more to turning away from Christ and returning to apostasy, than to simply not turning up at church as often as we might. The writer laments that “some” were indeed forsaking the assembly (Heb. 10:25). But that Greek word translated “some” recurs in Hebrews to describe those “some” who had forsaken the ecclesia and turned back to Judaism: “Take heed...lest there be in some [AV “any”] of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (and returning to Judaism- Heb. 3:12)... lest some [AV “any”] of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13)... for some, when they had heard, did provoke [referring to the earlier Hebrews in the wilderness who turned away from the hope of the Kingdom- Heb. 3:16]... some of you should seem to fail [like the condemned Hebrews in the wilderness- Heb. 4:1]... lest some fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11). In fact, right after the reference to the “some” who forsake the assembly, Heb. 10:28 speaks of “some [AV “he”- but the same Greek word in all these places for “some”] that despised Moses’ law”. Clearly, those Hebrews in the wilderness who turned away from the spirit of Christ in Moses and the hope of the Kingdom, are being held up as warnings to that same “some” in the first century Hebrew ecclesia who were turning back from the Hope of the Kingdom. Now let me get it right. I’m not in any way saying that we needn’t bother about our ecclesial attendance. Far from it! But I also feel it’s not right to insist that if someone doesn’t attend an ecclesia, for whatever reason, they are therefore guilty of the wilful sin and certain fiery condemnation of which Hebrews 10 speaks for those who forsake the assembly. In fact, the passage has almost been abused like that- as if to say: ‘If you don’t turn up on Sunday, if you quit meeting with us, then, you’ve quit on God and His Son’. This simply isn’t the case.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-5Importance_of_Breaking_of_Bread.html

June 4Jos 22

Who knows the height and depth, length and breadth of what could have been for God’s people? And the same is true for us today. According to Israel’s perception of the land, so it was defined for them. It seems they perceived the land to the East of Jordan as “unclean”- even though right up to the Euphrates had been promised to them. They were told that if they considered it unclean, then they could inherit on the West of Jordan (Josh. 22:19). And so with us- as we define God’s working, so, in some ways, will it be unto us. His mercy is upon us according as we trust in Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Isa 28

The Lord’s parable of the house built on sand was no doubt partly based on Is. 28:17, which speaks of the day of judgment being like hail which “shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters (which) shall overflow”. The spiritual house of the foolish builder was a lie, effectively; an appearance of real development which deceived men. For externally, men cannot know anything about the different foundations of houses built side by side. We are left to imagine the details of the parable. The foolish man would have run outside and watched his house being beaten down and washed away. He would have thought of trying to do something to stop the destruction, but then given up, realizing it was too late. The foolish girls saw that “our oil *is* running out” (Gk.). The unworthy will have that terrible sense of their opportunity and spirituality ebbing away from them. The impression is given in the

parable that the two houses were next door to each other; again confirming our feeling that this parable is about different attitudes to the word within the ecclesia.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-2A_House_On_A_Rock.htm

Heb 11

" Through faith even Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed" (Heb. 11:11 RV). " Even Sarah herself" is clearly making a point, holding up a flashing light over this particular example. There is every reason to think, from the Genesis record, that Sarah not only lacked faith in the promises, but also had a bitter, unspiritual mind. The account alludes back to Eve's beguiling of Adam when it records how " Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai" (Gen. 16:2) in acquiescing to her plan to give her a seed through Abram marrying his slave girl. The whole thing between Sarah and Abraham seems wrong on at least two counts: firstly it reflects a lack of faith in the promise; and secondly it flouts God's ideal standards of marriage. Sarai seems to have recognized the error when she bitterly comments to Abram: " My wrong be upon thee" (16:5). Her comment that " the Lord hath restrained me from bearing" (16:2) would suggest that she thought she hadn't been chosen to bear the promised seed. Yet because of her faith, says Heb. 11:11, she received strength to bear that seed.

Hagar was so persecuted by Sarah that she " fled from her face" (16:6). God's attitude to Hagar seems to reflect a certain amount of sympathy for the harsh way in which Sarah had dealt with her. These years of bitterness and lack of faith came to the surface when Sarah overheard the Angel assuring Abraham that Sarah really would have a son. She mockingly laughed at the promise, deep within herself (18:15). Yet according to Heb. 11:11, she rallied her faith and believed. But as soon as Isaac was born, her bitterness flew to the surface again when she was Ishmael mocking. In what can only be described as unrestrained anger, she ordered Hagar and Ishmael out into the scorching desert, to a certain death (humanly speaking). Again, one can sense the sympathy of God for Hagar at this time. And so wedged in between incidents which belied a deep bitterness, lack of faith and pride (after Isaac was born), the Spirit in Heb. 11:11 discerns her faith; on account of which, Heb. 11:12 implies (" therefore"), the whole purpose of God in Christ could go forward.

If this is how positively God perceives His people, we ought to take the same spirit with us into our relationships with them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-3-2Sarah_And_Abraham.htm

June 5Jos 23, 24

Moses gave repeated emphasis to the fact that our covenant with God precludes any covenant relationship with anyone else: " Thou shalt make no covenant with them...neither shalt thou make marriages with them...for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all (other) people that are on the face of the earth. The Lord ...set his love upon you ...chose you...because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers...the Lord hath brought you out (of the world) with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen...know therefore that the Lord thy God, he God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments...and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him.

Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments..." (Dt. 7:2-11). The wonder of our relationship with Yahweh is stated time and again. To marry back into Egypt, the house of bondmen from which we have been redeemed, is to despise the covenant, to reverse the redemptive work which God has wrought with us. In this context of marriage out of the Faith, we read that God will destroy "him that hateth him", and repay him to his face. On the other hand, not marrying Gentiles was part of *loving* God (Josh. 23:12,13).

So according to Moses, whoever married a Gentile was effectively hating God. It is possible that the Lord had this in mind when He taught that we either serve God and hate the world, or we love the world and hate God (Mt. 6:24). This isn't, of course, how we see it. We would like to think that there is a third way; a way in which we can love God and yet also love someone in the world. Yet effectively, in God's eyes, this is hating Him. Doubtless many Israelites thought Moses was going too heavy in saying that those who married Gentiles were hating God. And the new Israel may be tempted to likewise respond to the new covenant's insistence that our love of God means a thorough rejection of this world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-9Marriage_Out_Of_The_Faith.htm

Isa 29

time and again, the prophets predicted the destruction of the temple by the God of Israel. This was radical stuff in those days; the idea was that the survival of a god depended upon the survival of his temple or shrine. No pagan god would threaten to destroy his own shrine. Israel's God was so different. Likewise a pagan god looked after his own people against their enemies. But Yahweh of Israel sent and empowered Israel's enemies against them, and gave them victory against His own people; He encamped against His very own people (Is. 29:2-4). The archenemy of Israel, Assyria, was revealed as a rod in the God of Israel's hand (Is. 10:5 etc.), and the King of Babylon was Yahweh's servant who would come against Yahweh's own people (Jer. 25:9; 27:6 etc.). The will of Israel's God was that the capital city, seen by the people as the symbol and nerve centre of a god's power and control, was to be destroyed by Israel's enemies (Jer. 34:1-5; 21:3-7). In the surrounding culture of Israel, capital cities were portrayed as women, the wives of the gods. They are always presented as pure and wonderful. But the prophets represent cities like Jerusalem and Samaria as fallen women, whores. It was all *so* counter-cultural. Yahweh's prophet even appealed for Israel to surrender when under siege (Jer. 21:8-10). Try to enter into how radical and counter-cultural all this was. The prophets were trying to share the feelings and positions of a God *so* vastly different to the imaginations and understandings of His very own people. The nervous stress of this, the psychological pressure, can't be underestimated. And we are asked to share the spirit / mind / disposition of those prophets. Not only was God on the side of Israel's enemies; yet through all that, He somehow *was* with Israel; quite simply, "God is with us", even though it is He who encamps against them too (Is. 8:9,10; 18:4). The God of Auschwitz is somehow still the God of Israel. The very torment, even torture, of understanding that was etched clearly in the prophets, and it will be in us too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-6.htm>

Heb 12

Who we are is in reality our judgment. After death, our works "follow us" to judgment (Rev. 14:13). According to Jewish thought, men's actions followed them as witnesses before the

court of God, and this is the idea being picked up here. There is a great emphasis in Hebrews 11 on the way that each man has a "witness", "testimony" or "report" as a result of his life (Heb. 11:4,5,14,39). Because of this the dead are still spoken for, in that God keeps and knows that testimony, and it speaks for them (Heb. 11:4 AV mg.). The souls under the altar cry out (Rev. 6:10). But those men and women of Heb. 11 are then described in Heb. 12:1 as themselves "witnesses". Who they were is their witness, the testimony which is given of them in the court of Heaven and upon which God's judgment is decided.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

June 6Jdg 1

After the leadership of Moses, there came that of Joshua. When he died, Israel expected that another such leader would be raised up: "After the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first?" (Jud. 1:1). They expected a man to be named. But instead, they were told that the whole tribe of Judah must go up. The reality would have sunk home- no more charismatic leaders, now the ordinary people must take responsibility. Yet we so seek for human leadership- and that's the basis of so much apostasy from the faith, in theory and practice.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

Isa 30

Shining through all God's judgment is His hopefulness for His people, and His grace: "The Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore will He exalt Himself [in judgment] to show mercy to you" (Is. 30:18). This wasn't an angry God hitting back at a rebellious people; this is the God of Israel looking at judgment only as a way to reveal His grace and mercy in the longer term.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Heb 13

The Name of God of itself elicits repentance. Faced with the wonder of who He is, we can't be passive to it. We realize and are convicted of our sin sheerly by the reality of who He is, was and shall be. Heb. 13:15 speaks of the fruit of our lips, giving confession to His Name. The "fruit of lips" in Hos. 14:2 RVmg. to which the writer alludes is clearly enough, in the context, the confession of sin. And the context in Heb. 13:12 is that Christ's blood was shed to sanctify us. That declaration of the Name elicits a confession of sin, albeit in words of praise, to His Name. Mic. 6:9 has the same theme. When the Lord's voice calls to the city demanding repentance, "the man of wisdom shall see [perceive] thy name"- i.e. repent.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

June 7Jdg 2, 3

Even when God punished Israel, He seems to later almost take the blame for their judgments; thus He says that He left some of the Canaanite nations in the land to teach Israel battle experience (Jud. 3:2 NIV), whereas elsewhere the presence of those remaining nations is

clearly linked to Israel's faithlessness, and their survival in the land was actually part of God's punishment of Israel. He almost excuses Israel's apostasy by saying that they had not seen the great miracles of the Exodus (Jud. 2:7). This grace is shown by the same God to the new Israel.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-3A_Good_Conscience.htm

Isa 31

The Jews of Isaiah's day turned to political alliances with the Egyptians to save them from the threat of Assyria. Isaiah insisted: "Do not rely on horses! Do not trust in chariots... the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit" (Is. 31:1,3). Egypt and Assyria are likened to mere tiny insects, a fly and a bee. Yet Judah were doing what was humanly sensible and smart. To trust in politics, in what seems the usual human response to an issue rather than trust in God, is in fact something which breaks God's heart. With Assyria at the height of her power, Isaiah proclaimed her downfall (Is. 14:24-26). The life of faith in God is simply the very opposite of what seems humanly sensible. To give money we'd surely be better saving; risk our lives and health for another; neglect our business or career for the sake of the Lord's work. These ought to be the *normal* decisions we make, if we are walking in step with the spirit; and yet it would appear that they are the exceptions to the rule of far too many of our lives. And the point is, God's heart broke because His people were and are like this.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-4.htm>

Jam 1

"Wavereth" comes from a root meaning 'division', giving the idea of inner debate. We will see that time and again James is warning us against having a semi-spirituality, whereby only part of our mind is totally influenced by the word, whilst other parts still retain the thinking of the flesh. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed".

James being so shot through with allusions to the Gospels, it is tempting to think that James is as it were taking a snapshot of Peter, wavering both in his physical movement and in faith as he stood on the water. Jesus did not upbraid Peter (cp.1:5) for his request for strength and support, but was eager to satisfy it.

There is also a possible connection with Eph.4:13,14, which says that the miraculous Spirit gifts were to be possessed *until* the church reached the "perfect man" state, i.e. when the canon was completed (1 Cor.13:8-10 cp. 2 Tim.3:16,17), and that through being in that state they would "henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive". The primary reference is doubtless to the doctrine of the Judaizers. This would liken the brother in James 1 whose faith in the Lord's protection from temptation is weak, to the brother in Ephesians 4 who will not make full use of the word to remain in the "perfect man" state, and is therefore liable to be influenced by false teaching. Both brethren are weak for the same reason- not making full use of the Spirit's gift in the word. Eph.4:13,14 implies that firmly grasping the basic doctrines of the one faith results in us not being blown about by winds. This connection with James teaches that true doctrine will have a very practical effect upon our lives; in this case, by developing a firm faith.

James constantly sets before us the need to strive for a "perfect" (complete, mature) man state, through having a mind wholly committed to the word. His black and white, "hot or cold" approach is now powerfully shown: "Let not that man (the waverer) think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (1:7). This squashes the natural human reasoning that a bit of faith in prayer will lead to a bit of response from God. Faith is an absolute state. We either pray in faith- or with what are effectively empty words. But of course by contrast, if we do not waver, we certainly shall receive of the Lord. Again, there is another warning against semi-spirituality: having faith within certain limits, being content with expecting a small answer to our requests in accordance with our shaky faith. The way James understands human nature shines through, and it is fitting that someone of his experience and insight into the moment by moment ways of the flesh should have been the great leader of the early church. He too must have analysed his sins and temptations like we also can do. The correlation between his being such a senior brother and his evident appreciation of the wiles of the flesh must be significant; something to think about at the next ecclesial election?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/James_1.html

June 8Jdg 4, 5

The record of Deborah and Barak's victory over "Jabin king of Canaan" is shot through with connections with other passages which are clearly latter day prophecies, e.g. Ps. 83, Eze. 38. There is also a very deliberate series of allusions in their song of victory to Israel's exodus from Egypt and the destruction of Pharaoh's army - which we have shown to be symbolic of Israel's future deliverance from her Arab oppressors by the Lord's return. Other expositors have shown the links between the song of Deborah and Barak and Ps. 68, which is clearly prophetic of Christ's work of deliverance both on the cross and in the final deliverance of Israel from the forces of evil.

More details at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/6-3.htm>

Isa 32

Wealth is increasing in this world. Even a number who were previously without doubt 'poor' do in fact have enough over these days to buy a few of those extra luxury things which the Western world is so obsessed with. And many in the West end up receiving legacies from relatives, when they've already got themselves nicely established in life. They're strapped [in God's eyes] with extra cash. So are we to just hope on the Father doing a miracle to save us? Do we realize the grave importance of what the Lord is warning us of here? It seems to me that the Father has given us a way of escape. The enormous explosion of the Gospel in these last days has brought forth a huge harvest of converts amongst the genuinely and desperately poor of this world. The blind and lame, as it were, have been desperately herded into the feast, after so many others have rejected the call. And thanks to the communication revolution, our world-wide family can relatively easily respond to those needs. Is this not a wonderful, Divine way of escape for the 'richer' segment of the brotherhood? An escape, no less, from condemnation...? "The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand" (Is. 32:8) makes the same connection- the generous will "stand" in the last day because of their generous spirit.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/24Funding_Mission_Work.htm

Jam 2

"For that law which said (AVmg.), Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law" (v.11).

The statement that "that law" included two separate commandments (concerning murder and adultery) shows that "the royal law" of v.8 may well refer to the whole law of Moses, which was fulfilled by loving the neighbour (Rom.13:9). These two commands concerning adultery and murder occur together elsewhere; it may be that James chose them because in spirit they are easily broken due to an uncontrolled mind; and the control of the mind is the great theme of James. Spiritual adultery is further defined in 4:4: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?", thus interpreting adultery as having worldly friends. Those to whom James was writing were aware, so v.11 implies, that literal and spiritual adultery were wrong, but were not so conscious of the command not to kill each other by hating them in their heart (Matt.5:21,22). The fighting and killing which James describes as happening amongst his readers (4:1,2) must refer also to this spiritual murder due to lack of love (to what else can it apply?). It is noteworthy that James is one of the few New Testament letters that does not contain explicit warning against sexual misbehaviour. We can thus start to build up a fuller picture of James' audience- keeping dutifully away from worldly friendships, holding themselves back from sexual sin, yet trading zealously with the world to make much profit (4:13), and unaware of the supreme importance of the command to love each other, resulting in them transgressing the law in spirit. Perhaps they are not without their counterparts today.

This lack of love was especially shown in their words: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (v.12). Notice the equation of words and actions ("speak...do"), continuing the theme of thoughts and words being the same as physical actions. "The law of liberty" is normally used elsewhere in contrast to the Law of Moses- another subtle swipe at the Judaist tendencies in the early Jewish ecclesias. We must speak our words in accordance with the fact that we will be judged by the word; if we have the word/law of liberty (cp.1:25) in our hearts and therefore influencing our words, we need not fear our judgement by that word. Thus we judge ourselves now by our response to the word in practice, by how far we let it influence our words and doings, especially in the area of showing love to our brother.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/James_2.html

June 9Jdg 6

The Israelites who fled to the dens and caves in Jud. 6:2 are described as heroes of faith because of what they did (Heb. 11:38). And yet their domination by the Philistines was a result of their idolatry. They were idolatrous, and yet some had faith; and it was this faith which was perceived by God. As God looks on our better side, so we must do to our brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-3-1Christian_Hypocrisy.htm

Isa 33

“There is no regard for man” was the complaint of Is. 33:8- the value and meaning of the human person was disregarded. And this was the cause of ‘bitter weeping’ (Is. 33:7). Perhaps we could say that the prophets are characterized by taking the individual seriously. We seem to have a hard enough job maintaining a sense of the value of persons ourselves, quite apart from weeping that others don’t have such values. This level of sensitivity to human sin is quite something; and yet this is the spirit of prophecy. In the ancient world it was felt that, as Cicero put it, “the gods attend to great matters; they neglect small ones” (*De Natura Deorum* Vol. 2, 167). The God of Israel was and is quite different; for as the prophets show, what men may regard as small issues are to Him all and vitally important. That slightly unkind email, that less than truthful passing comment on a brother, that exaggeration... these aren’t trivialities to God. What to us are trivialities are crucial to Him; that’s the message of the prophets. The spirit of the prophets cried out in pain and anguish because of that kind of thing; and their spirit is to be ours. There’s something alive and passionate to the words of the prophets. They’re not just droning on. Although they largely wrote in poetry, let not this delude us from feeling the cutting edge of their passion. Their poetry wasn’t what Wordsworth thought poetry is- “emotion recollected in tranquillity”. The attack on complacency and passionlessness was full frontal: “Tremble, you women who are at ease [as you stroll the supermarkets of today], shudder, you complacent ones [as you hang out with your friends, lost in small talk]; strip and make yourselves bare” (Is. 32:11 RSV- the RSV seems to me to capture the passion of the prophetic words best of all the English translations).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-3.htm>

Jam 3, 4

Despite all the commotion within their hearts and the ecclesia, and perhaps also in their strivings in their misdirected prayers, "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (v.3). Although they asked in prayer, in God's sight such words are not prayer: "Ye ask not...ye ask", because desiring is not praying. Alternatively, this may be looking back to 1:4,5 about asking for wisdom, as if to say 'You don't receive answers to your prayers for material things because you don't pray firstly for the wisdom from the word to be in your heart, which would have made your subsequent prayers powerful'.

There is a link here with Mt.7:7,8: "Ask, and it shall be given you...for every one that asketh receiveth". But "Ye ask and receive *not*". The reason for such powerful prayer is given in the surrounding context in Mt.7- if they were not hypocrites in criticizing their brethren, which 3:17 implies they were guilty of, and if they did to men as they would like God to do to them (Mt.7:2,12). Not surprisingly therefore, the prayers of these brethren were not answered as Mt.7 promised. There is probably also a reference to Jn.15:7: "If...my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you". "Done unto you" possibly implies physical blessing. Because the word was not in them, which is the whole theme of James, this promise was not fulfilled in them.

"Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (v.3).

"Amis" is from a word meaning to be sick or diseased, or generally 'evil'. Although it is not the same word translated "sick" in 5:14-16, there may be a connection with the idea there of them being struck with physical sickness because of their sin and being advised to pray for forgiveness and therefore a cure. Here in 4:3 James is saying that their prayers were for

human things and therefore they and their prayers were sick. "Consume" means 'to spend' in a financial sense, thus suggesting that they were asking God to specifically provide money, which they would then spend on their various pleasures ("lusts"). This would explain their 'killing' of their brethren by holding back wages from them (5:4), because they specifically wanted the cash in hand; see notes on 5:3 too.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/James_4.html

June 10Jdg 7, 8

Manoah's desire to detain the Angel and offer sacrifice (13:15) was exactly that of Gideon (6:18). His belief after he had seen the Angel ascend (13:20 = 6:21), and his subsequent fear, were again expressed in the words of Gideon (13:21,22 cp. 6:22). As Gideon was, perhaps subconsciously, the hero of Manoah, so Samson followed his father's spirituality in this. It seems he lived out parental expectation, and imbibed the spirituality of his father without making it his own. Born and raised believers, beware.

As the Spirit came upon Gideon (6:34), so it is described as coming upon Samson (14:6). It seems that the incident in ch. 15, where Samson visits his wife with a kid and uses this as an excuse to kill many Philistines, was planned by him to reflect Gideon's zeal. The way Gideon brought a kid to Yahweh (6:19) may reflect how Samson came with a kid (15:1). He then takes 300 foxes and puts firebrands in their tails. Why 300? Surely this was in conscious imitation of how Gideon took 300 men and put firebrands in their hands, and with them destroyed God's enemies (7:16). The connection between the faithful 300 and the foxes could suggest that in Samson's eyes, he didn't even have one faithful Israelite to support him; he had to use animals instead. It may be that as Gideon "went down" to destroy God's enemies (7:9), so Samson justified his 'going down' to the Philistines to take their women, as well as to destroy their warriors (14:1,5,7,10). As Gideon was somehow 'separate from his brethren' in his zeal, so was Samson. And yet Samson seems to have copied just the externalities of Gideon ⁽⁴⁾; not the real spirit. And therefore as Gideon foolishly multiplied women to himself in the spiritual weakness of his middle age, so perhaps Samson saw justification for his attitude. 'If heroic Gideon could indulge the flesh in this area, I surely can'. He fell into our common trap: to compare ourselves amongst ourselves, to measure ourselves against human standards as we find them among the contemporary brotherhood (2 Cor. 10:12). Saul should have realized that Samson, like him, idolized Gideon, but only on a surface level- and should have taken the lesson. But he didn't see the points we've made in this paragraph. He could have done, but he didn't bother. And so with us. The word supplies us the potential power to overcome. It can often happen that the daily readings are almost purpose-designed for our present situation. Yet if we neglect to read them- that help lies untapped.

When Samson decided to attack Gaza by going into a harlot's house, he may have been consciously imitating the way the spies played their part in Jericho's destruction (16:1). And yet it was once again only a surface imitation. He fell for the 'little of both' syndrome, justifying it under the guise of Scriptural examples. He had done this in his youth; he "went down" to take a Philistine girl for wife (14:1,5,7,10); and yet by doing so he was seeking an opportunity to slay Philistines. He may well have had in mind the sustained emphasis on the fact that Gideon went *down* to destroy the Midianites (Jud. 7:9,10,11,24). He went down morally and physically, and yet he justified this by thinking that as Gideon went down physically, so would he. Such is the complexity of the process of temptation. And all this is written for our learning. Significantly, the major temptations within the Lord's mind- as far

as we can tell from the record of the wilderness temptations- was to misinterpret Scripture to His own ends; to soften the cross.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-2-3Samson_And_Gideon.htm

Isa 34

The laws of the kings of Babylon, Media and Persia altered not (Heb. passed not, were eternal), Dan. 6:8. They were a mimicry of God's unchanging word: Is. 34:16; 45:23. These passages in their immediate context were God's comment on the Assyrian / Babylonian claims that the words of their kings were never changed. We too live in a world which apes God's Kingdom, with so many who play God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/a3The_12th_Imam.htm

Jam 5

"And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (v.18).

Again we are left to imagine when, where and how Elijah made this prayer, seeing that it is unrecorded. After his glorious triumph of faith on Carmel in the sight of all Israel, there appeared at last to be a significant repentance: "When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Yahweh, He is the God", and promptly proceeded to massacre the priests of Baal. No doubt finding the four barrels of water to put on the sacrifice as the ritual required had involved considerable effort- making them reflect on the God whom they knew in their hearts provided rain. Elijah then went up to the solitude of the crags of Carmel, "cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees (in fervent prayer), and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea" for rain. This command was repeated seven times. Being a man of like passions as us, it took seven repeated prayers, a widow continually coming and not taking no for an answer, for there to be even an indication of a response. Thus Elijah's 'praying again' was for a lifting of the physical curse on the land because of their repentance. Note his running before Ahab's chariot as the rain started to come down, symbolic of his belief that by his repentance Ahab was the righteous king that he had come to herald (1 Kings 18:39,33,42-46). This same calibre of head-between-the-knees, up-in-the-mountain prayer, consistently repeated, would lead to the lifting of the sickness placed on the first century ecclesia.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/James_5.html

June 11Jdg 9

Biblically, the words translated " perfect" do not necessarily imply moral perfection, i.e. sinlessness. Rather do they carry the idea of completeness and fullness: " Perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jam. 1:4). Mary and Joseph " fulfilled (same word translated " perfect") the days" of the Passover (Lk. 2:43); " the scripture was fulfilled" (John 19:28). Christ is " a more perfect tabernacle" (Heb. 9:11). " More perfect" indicates a relative sense of completion, for one cannot be " more" perfect in the absolute sense. The Hebrew translated " perfect" is also rendered " sincere" (Jud. 9:16; Josh. 24:14). Again, there is no implication of sinlessness. The scriptures teach that both individuals and the church as a whole must

develop toward some point of " perfection" (Lk. 8:14; Heb. 6:1). However, this is a point of completion of spiritual development in certain aspects, not moral sinlessness. David, Asa and others are said to be perfect of heart all their days yet they still sinned in their hearts (I Kings. 15:3; 2 Chron. 15:17; 16:10,12). Therefore, " perfection" is not total sinlessness; it is a condition of true faith in God and of trying to obey Him. So we are on a journey, in a Divine development program, today and every day. Yet ultimately, there is a way that we can be considered " perfect" before God- it is the blood of Christ which perfects: " By one offering [Christ] hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:1,14).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/8-3-1problem_of_human_nature.htm

Isa 35

We're familiar with the references to God hardening the heart of Pharaoh (Ex. 14:8 etc.). However, the same Hebrew words occur in a positive context- for God also hardens or strengthens the hearts of the righteous (Ps. 27:14; Is. 35:4). Indeed, Is. 35:4 speaks of how the righteous shouldn't have a weak or [Heb.] 'fluid' heart, but rather a hardened one. Clearly enough, God solidifies human attitudes, one way or the other. This is a sobering thought- for He is prepared to confirm a person in their weak thinking. But on the other hand, even the weakest basic intention towards righteousness is solidified by Him too.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-1The_Upward_Spiral.htm

1Pe 1

The seed is the word (Lk. 8:11); and " the word" doesn't necessarily mean the whole Bible (although the whole Bible is of course inspired). The phrase specifically means the word of the power of the Gospel, by which we were ushered into spiritual being. And *this* is what brings forth fruit, through our 'patient' and continued response to it. We were born again, " not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God...and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23,25). Time and again the New Testament uses " the word of God" or " the word of the Lord (Jesus)" as shorthand for the preaching of the basic Gospel. *This* is the seed, this is the source of new life, this is what can lead to new character and behaviour in us. James speaks of being " doers of the word" (1:22,25), using the same word as in the parable of the sower, there translated 'to bring forth fruit'. Note that " the word of God" in the NT often refers specifically to the Gospel. James foresaw the possibility of hearing the word of the Gospel but not doing it, not bringing forth what those basic doctrines imply. He foresees how we can admire it as a vain man seeing his reflection in a mirror. We are not to be " forgetful hearers" of the word of the basics, the " implanted word" (1:21 RV- another reference to the sower parable). We aren't to learn the Gospel and then forget those doctrines. We are to be doers of them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/1-3power_of_the_gospel.htm

June 12Jdg 10, 11

God told Israel straight in Jud. 10:13: "Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more". But they begged Him, and He did. And likewise in Hosea, He said He would give them up completely, but just couldn't bring Himself to do it. God really is open to changing His program in response to human prayer.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

Isa 36

If we're really confident in prayer being answered, we won't be shy to openly state to others that we've prayed about something and expect the answer to be coming. Paul even asks Philemon to prepare his bedroom for him, because he's so confident that prayers will be answered, and he'll be able to come to him. Another example would be how Hezekiah prays to be 'delivered' (Ps. 120:2) from the Assyrian invasion. Rabshakeh had heard of this even in the enemy camp, and warned the people of Jerusalem not to trust in Hezekiah's promise to them that his prayer would be answered and therefore "the Lord will surely deliver us" (Is. 36:18). Another lesson from this latter example is that prayerful attitudes spread- for Hezekiah had prayed for God to 'deliver' "my soul" (Ps. 120:2)- and yet the people therefore came to believe that the Lord would surely deliver "us", i.e. all of them and not just Hezekiah personally as he had initially prayed.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-4prayer_changes_things.htm

1Pe 2

To follow the Lord in cross bearing is indeed the end of the Gospel. And Peter understood this when he wrote that "hereunto were ye called [i.e. this is the bottom line of life in Christ]: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Fellowshiping His sufferings and final death is following Him. Little would Peter have realized that when he first heard the call "Follow me", and responded. And so with us. The meaning of following, the real implication of the cross, is something which can never be apparent at conversion. It is perhaps significant, given the theme of 'following' in the records of Peter, that he became well known for 'leading about' his wife (1 Cor. 9:5), as if she followed him everywhere. Peter translated the principles of following Christ into domestic life. There was a time when he may well have 'forsaken' his wife in order to follow Christ (Mt. 19:27-29). But further down that path of following he came to see that as he was to follow his Lord to the end, so he was to be as the self-crucifying Christ to her, and lead her in her following of him that she might follow Christ.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/12.htm>

June 13Jdg 12, 13

We know that we sadly oscillate between the flesh and the spirit. And yet Scripture abounds with examples of where God sees us as in a permanent state of either sin or righteousness. We are fountains that bring forth good water, and therefore by that very definition cannot occasionally bring forth bitter water; we are good fruit trees or bad ones. We aren't a little of both, in God's sight. This is surely because He sees us on the basis of the fact that we are in Christ, clothed with His righteousness, rather than as individuals who sometimes act righteously and sometimes not during the course of a day. Thus God saw Samson as a lifelong Nazarite (Jud. 13:7), although we know there were times when he broke the Nazarite vow by, e.g., touching dead bodies and having his hair cut. The challenging thing is to behold our brethren as having the "in Christ" status (for we can't impute anything else to them, lest we condemn them), and not to see them from the point of view of people who sometimes act righteously and sometimes don't.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-2Flesh_And_Spirit.html

Isa 37

the experiences of believers are often suggestive of those of other believers. Insofar as we appreciate this, we will find strength to go the right way. Consider, for example, how Hezekiah was intended to see the similarities between himself and the earlier king Ahaz his father, and learn the lessons:

Ahaz	Hezekiah
Threatened by invasion; tempted to turn to human help (Is. 7:2)	Ditto (Is. 37:1)
Visited by Isaiah and told to not fear (Is. 7:4-9)	Ditto (Is. 37:6,7)
Ahaz was unfaithful by “the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the fuller’s field” (Is. 7:3)	Here in just the same place Hezekiah’s faith was tested and he learnt the lessons of Ahaz’ failure (Is. 36:2).
Given a sign by God and promised deliverance (Is. 7:14)	Ditto (Is. 37:30).
Ahaz refused to ask for a sign when offered one (Is. 7:11)	Hezekiah learnt, and asked for a sign (Is. 38:7,22). Thus his asking for a sign was not a sign of faithlessness but rather his seeking to not be like Ahaz.
“The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform it” (Is. 9:6)	Ditto (Is. 37:32).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

1Pe 3-5

Knowing his condemnation after his denials, where did Peter go? What was conversion for him? Probably he could quite easily have also gone and hung himself- for he was of that personality type. But instead he went to the cross- he was a witness of the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 5:1), and his words and writing consistently reflect the language of Golgotha’s awful scene. There, in that personal, hidden observation of the cross, probably disguised in the crowd, not daring to stand with John and the women, his real conversion began. Then his love for his Lord became the more focused. Now he could *do* nothing- and his thinking had been so full of *doing* until that point. All he could do was to watch that death and know his own desperation, and somehow believe in grace. “Who his own self bare our sins in his body up on to the tree” (2:24 RVmg.) suggests the watching Peter reflecting, as the Lord’s body was lifted up vertical, that his sins of denial and pride were somehow with his Lord, being lifted up by Him. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18) could well have been written by Peter with a glance back at the way that after his denials, he the unjust went to the crucifixion scene and reflected just this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-8-1What_Is_Conversion.htm

June 14Jdg 14, 15

Samson killed a lion, escaped fire and killed many Philistines by his faith (Heb. 11:32-34)- so the Spirit tells us. Yet these things were all done by him at times when he had at best a partial faith, or was living out moments of faith. He had a worldly Philistine girlfriend, a sure grief of mind to his Godly parents, and on his way to the wedding he met and killed a lion- through faith, Heb. 11 tells us (Jud. 14:1-7). The Philistines threatened to burn him with fire, unless his capricious paramour of a wife extracted from him the meaning of his riddle. He told her, due, it seems, to his human weakness and hopeless sexual weakness. He then killed 30 Philistines to provide the clothes he owed the Philistines on account of them answering the riddle (Jud. 14:15-19). It is evident that Samson was weak in many ways at this time; the Proverbs make many allusions to him, the strong man ruined by the evil Gentile woman, the one who could take a city but not rule his spirit etc. And yet underneath all these weaknesses, serious as they were, there was a deep faith within Samson which Heb. 11 highlights. Let's take this as a comfort in our weakness, rather than an excuse for them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-3-1Moments_Of_Faith.htm

Isa 38

David didn't want to die because he knew that in death, he would not praise Yahweh (Ps. 6:4-6). Hezekiah likewise (Is. 38:19). For these men, praise of Yahweh was the essential purpose of living. Praise is not only about offering up positive, joyful emotions to God. Hezekiah spoke some very sober words when he recovered from his sickness, writing them down for others to consider. He realized that his recovery was related to God's mercy in overlooking his sins; his gratitude was difficult to express in words; his way of expressing it was to walk in softness and sobriety before his God: "What shall I say?...I shall go softly all (the rest of) my years" (Is. 38:9,15). But Hezekiah described all this as "praise" (Is. 38:18). Thus our very way of living, even down to our body language, is an expression of our praise.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/1.htm>

2Pe 1, 2

Peter's letters are packed with allusion, consciously and unconsciously, to the Gospel records. And yet closer analysis reveals that he has an undoubted fondness for two areas: the cross, and incidents which include his own weakness, both morally and intellectually. In this lies Peter's power, and it must have made him quite some pastoral figure in the early ecclesias. He could plead with men, both in and out of the Faith, with a credibility that lay in his ready acceptance of his failures, and his evident acceptance of his Lord's gracious forgiveness and teaching. Consider how he tells Ananias that Satan has filled his heart (Acts 5:3), alluding to what everyone full well knew: that Satan had desired to have him too, and in the denials he had pretty well capitulated (Lk. 22:31,32). Peter's disciplining of Ananias, so soon after his own deference to the pressures of Satan as opposed to those of the Lord, would have been done surely in subdued, saddened and introspective tones. There also seem to be a number of unconscious allusions by Peter back to his own failures- e.g. "Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren" (Acts 12:17) was an allusion to the women being told to go and shew the news of the resurrection to the brethren *and Peter*, who was then in

spiritual crisis. Those words, that fact, was ingrained upon Peter to the point that he unconsciously builds it in to his own words. Consider the following examples in the letters of Peter of how he uses the areas of his own failures as the material for exhortation:

- Peter must have felt to the false teachers with whom he contended as he did towards Ananias. He warns that they even deny the Lord who bought them (2 Peter 2:1). They *even* do this- as if denying the Lord was the worst possible, imaginable sin. And it was the very thing which he had so publically done, three times, and had effectively done again when bowing to Judaist false teaching. They deny "the Lord"- and that had been Peter's favourite title for Jesus during the ministry (see *Peter And Christ*). As he warned of the evil of the apostate brethren, his own sense of personal failure and frailty was so evidently shown. And yet it was no reason for him to simply say 'So, I can't judge, I can't criticize another after what I did'. What he had learnt from the whole experience of forgiveness and grace was that the wondrous grace and atonement of Christ *must at all costs be preached and preserved*.

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-4-3The Letters Of Peter.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-4-3The_Letters_Of_Peter.htm)

June 15Jdg 16

You will recall the words of Heb. 2:14,15 about Jesus: " through death he (destroyed) him that had the power of death" . This is exactly the idea of Jud. 16:30: " Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life" . Through his own death, Christ destroyed the power of sin, epitomized in the dead Philistines. Perhaps there is an allusion in Hebrews 2 to this passage. Heb. 2:15 goes on to say that Christ delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" . Now that's packed with allusions to the time of the judges- Israel in hard bondage to their Philistine masters, living in fear, until judges or 'deliverers' like Samson delivered them from their oppressors. The same great relief which Israel felt after Samson's deliverances of them, can be experienced by us spiritually. The sins, the doubts, the fears which we all have as we analyze our spiritual standing, should melt away when we recall the great deliverance which we have received. In practice, Samson must have become a larger than life figure. We get the impression that the Israelites had a problem relating to him due to his fantastic physical strength; his wives likewise must have felt distanced from him, knowing that he had a spiritual inner being which they had no access to. We too can feel distanced from Christ as we perceive more and more the supreme spiritual strength which he had. Yet in all his ways, Samson sought the glory of God, and means of overcoming Israel's Philistine enemies. Even his first marriage with a Philistine woman was " of the Lord, that he (Samson) sought an occasion against the Philistines" (14:4). Here we see his all consuming desire to actively seek conflict with the powers of sin which debilitated and crippled Israel. As we see the forces of sin so strong in our own lives, as well as in the new Israel generally, we too should have the zeal which he had in seeking an occasion against our own flesh. It is easy to think that we are just asked to passively resist temptation whenever it arises. But the example of Samson and the Lord Jesus was of active warfare against the flesh, going on to the offensive rather than being only on the defensive.

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-8Samson A Type Of Christ.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-8Samson_A_Type_Of_Christ.htm)

Isa 39

It seems that Hezekiah lived on a high, high spiritual level prior to his illness and the final invasion. He seems to have been single, and then in his illness he wished for a descendant, and subsequently married the Gentile Hephzibah. However, he didn't render again according to the benefit done to him (2 Chron. 32:25), and was therefore threatened with judgment. In response to this he humbled himself, and the judgment was postponed. He commented that it was a good deal for him, because he would have peace for the rest of the days of the 15 years which God had given him (2 Kings 20:19). My feeling is that Hezekiah lived the rest of his days acceptable with God, but on a markedly lower level than he had lived his earlier life. There are some other kings who are recorded as having lived acceptable lives to God, although evidently they lived on a lower level than the likes of David.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-4Jephthah%27s_Vow_Principle.htm

2Pe 3

The " first" or most important (Greek) thing they were to understand when it came to Bible teaching about the last days was " that there shall come in the last days scoffers" (v.3). The presence of false teachers within the ecclesia would be one of the clearest signs of the second coming. The Lord " began" his Olivet prophecy with a warning about false teachers, as if this would be the first main sign (Mk. 13:5). Likewise Paul says that it was needless for him to write to the Thessalonians about the " times and seasons" of Christ's return. " For yourselves know perfectly (clearly) that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess.5:1,2); i.e. it would be when there were unready elements within the ecclesia, to whom Christ's return would be thief-like. In similar vein, John taught that the believers could be certain they were in the 'last days' of AD70 because of the presence of false teaching (1 Jn.2:18). Connecting this with our comment on 1 Thess.5:1,2, it may well be that the 'false teaching' is not so much in terms of basic abstract doctrine, but in the encouragement of a way of life that is not alert for the second coming. As we progress through 2 Peter 3, and indeed the entire New Testament, it becomes painfully obvious that this class of people were to arise *within* the ecclesia. As there were false teachers among natural Israel, so there must be within the New Israel (2 Pet.2:1). Peter implies that this fact is a major theme in the teaching of all the apostles and Spirit-guided brethren. There are a number of connections between the descriptions of these people in 2 Pet.2, and the language of 2 Pet.3.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/20.htm>

June 16Jdg 17, 18

There evidently were leaders of some sort in the first ecclesias; and so there ought to be in our groups those who are in positions of respect and thereby leadership. But let's be clear about one thing: human beings naturally seek to have leaders, to have someone to shoulder the responsibility for their decisions, someone to tell them what to do, how to believe... hence the amazing popularity of the Catholic church. Yet there are Biblical 'leaders' in the ecclesias we read of in the New Testament; but it can't be that our leaders today are leaders for us in the sense that people naturally desire leadership in order to offload the burden of personal decision making and exercising of our own conscience. Recall how in the time of the Judges, Micah asked the young Levite, who was "unto him as one of his sons", to "be

unto me a father and a priest” (Jud. 17:10,11- note the paradox), resulting in others likewise asking him to “be unto us a father and a priest” (Jud. 18:19). The point is, no matter how unqualified a person may be for the job, they may be pressed into being leaders because that’s what nominally religious people so desperately need.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1-5elders_and_deacons.htm

Isa 40

The message of Is. 40:3 is that before the final coming of the Lord, there will be a proclamation of this by His people: “Prepare *ye* [plural] the way of the Lord”. As the King’s servants went ahead of him to make the path he had to travel smooth and plain [remember there were no motorways then!], so we go ahead of the returning Lord of all the earth, to prepare the way / road for Him. The fulfilment of this commission by John the Baptist in the first century is therefore a great pattern for our fulfilment of it before the Lord’s *second* coming in our age. And yet within Isaiah, there is ample evidence that *God* prepares His *own* way: “I will do a new thing...I will even make a way in the wilderness” (Is. 43:19). Perhaps the element of unreality here, the ‘new thing’, is that the King Himself prepares His own way or road. Or again: “I will make all my mountains a way” (Is. 49:11). The connection with Is. 40:3 is that in the work of preparing the Lord’s way, in the last great preaching appeal of all time in the lead up to the second coming, the Lord Himself will work with us to make that way plain and clear. In all the challenges of the latter day fulfilment of the great commission, the Lord Himself will work with us.

The Isaiah 40 passage is therefore a command for our latter day witness to all the world, Israel especially, to prepare their way for the Lord’s coming. We are to “cry” unto Zion that “her iniquity is pardoned”, but we are also to ‘cry’ for her to repent, to be “made straight”, for the rough places to be ‘made plain’; to “cry aloud...lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression (Is. 40:2-4; 58:1). It’s exactly because we have in prospect been forgiven that we are called to repent. The forgiveness has already been granted; iniquity has been pardoned. We are to ‘cry’ out this fact; and also to ‘cry out’ for repentance. But we have to respond to that. It’s similar to how Saul/Paul was called ‘brother’ even before his conversion and baptism. The world’s redemption was achieved through the cross; but we have to appeal to the world to accept it. And in our own lives we must live out what we are preaching to others; exactly because we have already been forgiven, we need to repent of what we’ve been forgiven of, to as it were claim that forgiveness as our very own. And the same Hebrew word translated ‘cry’ occurs in the same context in Is. 40:26; 43:1; 45:3,4; 48:12; 54:6, where we read that it is God Himself who calls every one of Israel back to Him, just as He calls every star by its own personal name. And so in our personal calling of men and women, in our crying out to them in these last days to be prepared for the Lord’s coming, we are workers together with God. He is crying out to them, through our feeble, shy, embarrassed, uncertain words of witness. Likewise it is God Himself who makes the crooked places straight in Is. 42:16 and 45:2- whereas Is. 40:3, it is we the preachers who are to do this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a5-3preaching_commission_of_isaiah_40.htm

1Jo 1, 2

It's interesting to compare the Gospel of John with his epistles. Clearly, he saw himself as manifesting to his brethren what the Lord Jesus had manifested to him. John records how the Lord had said: " I have said this to you...that your joy may be fulfilled" (Jn. 15:11), but he then says of himself that " We are writing these things so that your joy may be fulfilled" (1 Jn. 1:4 RV). He saw himself as the face and mouth of Jesus to his brethren; and so are all of us who are in Christ.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-7preaching_as_christ_did.htm

June 17Jdg 19

The gruesome record of the Levite cutting up his wife's body and sending parts of the body throughout all Israel has much to teach us of the power of the memorial service. It was done so that all who received the parts of that broken body would "take advice and speak [their] minds" (Jud. 19:30). It was designed to elicit the declaration of their hearts, and above all to provoke to concrete action. Splitting up a body and sharing it with all Israel was clearly a type of the breaking of bread, where in symbol, the same happens. Consider some background, all of which points forward to the Lord's sufferings:

- The person whose body was divided up was from Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah (Jud. 19:1)
- They were 'slain' by permission of a priest
- They were dragged to death by a wicked Jewish mob
- They were "brought forth" to the people just as the Lord was to the crowd (Jud. 19:25)
- "Do what seemeth good unto you" (Jud. 19:24) is very much Pilate language
- A man sought to dissuade the crowd from their purpose- again, as Pilate.

There should be a like effect upon us as we receive the emblems of the Lord's 'broken body'- the inner thoughts of our hearts are elicited, and we are provoked to action.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-2cross_and_selfexamination.htm

Isa 41

Alexander Heidel analyzed the recovered Babylonian poem to Marduk *Enuma Elish*, discovering phrase after phrase in it which recurs in Isaiah- with reference to Yahweh exclusively. The similarities are exact, and impressive. Without doubt, Isaiah was developing a major theme in his later writings- that the true Israel of God must not have any part in the Marduk cult, and must understand all the claims made for Marduk as being untrue, and solely appropriate to Yahweh God of Israel. Consider some of the claims made for Marduk (exact references given in Heidel):

- "Marduk is King alone" (cp. "Your [Israel's] God reigns as King!", Is. 52:7)
- "None among the gods can equal him"

- Marduk killed Tiamat in the waters and cut him in pieces [applied to Yahweh in Is. 51:9,10]
- Creator of the stars (cp. Is. 40:26; Is. 45:12).
- Marduk is without comparison (cp. Is. 40:18,25 etc.)
- Marduk was, and no other (cp. Is. 45:5,6 etc.)

There are also mocking allusions to Marduk, showing Yahweh's supremacy over him. Marduk was formed- but Yahweh had no god before Him and will have none after Him (Is. 43:10). Marduk had a counsellor, Ea, called in the inscriptions "the all-wise one". But Yahweh has all wisdom and has no such counsellor (Is. 40:13,14; Is. 41:28). All this reference to the Marduk cult was in my opinion not merely a pointless mockery and poking of fun at the Persian culture. It was a very real appeal to the Jewish exiles to quit it, to come out and be separate; remember again and again that Mordecai [and perhaps Esther too] had adopted names reflective of the Marduk cult.

All this becomes relevant to us when we perceive that we in these last days are living in a similar position to the exiles. The difference between our spiritual "culture" and that of the world around us is marked and pointed.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

1Jo 3, 4

John's claim that he beheld the glory of God's Son may therefore be a specific reference to the way he describes his own 'seeing' of the crucifixion in John 19:35: "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe". He seems to be saying: 'I saw Him there. I really and truly did'. He uses the same kind of language in 1 Jn. 4:14: "we have seen and do testify [cp. "his record is true"] that the Father sent the son to be the saviour of the world" in the cross. "The only begotten of the Father" is a phrase nearly always used in the context of the Lord's death (e.g. Jn. 3:16). The love of God was defined in the way the Lord laid down His life in death (1 Jn. 3:16); but it is equally defined in that "God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live" (1 Jn. 4:9). God sending His son into the world was therefore in His death specifically. And it was through this that life was won for us. As He hung covered in blood and spittle, as He gasped out forgiveness for His enemies, God's Son as it were came into the hard world of men. The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not and does not overcome it. There, the word, the essential love and grace and judgment and mercy of Yahweh, was made flesh, and tabernacled amongst us. The common translation "dwelt" can give the sense that John is merely saying 'Jesus lived in Israel'; but there is far more to it than that. In clear allusion to his Gospel, John opens his first letter by speaking of the Lord Jesus, whom "we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled [a reference to the taking down of the body and embalming?], of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness [cp. 19:35] , and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us" (1 Jn 1:1-3). The manifestation of the Son was supremely in His death (1 Jn. 3:5,8; 4:9 cp. Jn. 3:16; Heb. 9:26 Gk.; 1 Tim. 3:16; Jn. 17:6 cp. 26). And John exalts that they saw this, and now they too

declare / manifest it to the world. One cannot behold the cross of Christ and not witness it to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/8Cross_John_Gospel.htm

June 18Jdg 20

Peace offerings were also offered in times of Israel's sadness and defeat (Jud. 20:26; 21:4). In our traumas of life, we need to remember that the only thing that matters is our peace with God, the joyful fact that we have nothing separating us. As Israel made their peace offerings at those times, so we too should consider the possibility of breaking bread, perhaps alone, as we meet the desperate traumas of our lives.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-2breaking_of_bread_peace_offering.htm

Isa 42

God speaks of being burdened by Israel's sins (Is. 43:24)- and yet this is a prelude to the passages which speak of the Lord Jesus bearing our sins on the cross (Is. 53:4,11,12). We even read of God being wearied by Israel's sins (Is. 7:13; Jer. 15:6; Ez. 24:12; Mal. 2:17). Even though God does not "grow weary" (Is. 40:28) by nature, it seems to me that in His full entering into His people's situation, He does allow Himself to grow weary with the sins of those with whom He is in covenant relationship. It was this kind of capacity which God has which was supremely revealed in His 'sharing in' the crucifixion of His Son. God's long term 'holding His peace' at Israel's sins resulted in a build up of internal forces within God: "For a long time have I held my peace... restrained myself, now will I cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant" (Is. 42:14; 63:15; 64:12). God crying out, gasping, panting... leads straight on, in the context, to the suffering servant. This is the same idea as God's heart growing warm and being kindled in internal struggle about His people in Hos. 11:8,9. And all this went on supremely at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

1Jo 5

The experience of an acceptive mutuality between God and man is surely at the very core of our spirituality; it should be part of an inner spiritual shell that nothing, *nothing* can shake: aggression from our brethren, disillusion with other Christians, persecution from the world, painful personal relationships... Israel were to give their hand to God, and His hand in turn would give them a heart to follow Him further (2 Chron. 30:8 cp. 12 A.V.mg.). " This is the witness of God...He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness *in himself*...the (i.e. this) witness of God is greater" than that of men (1 Jn. 5:9,10). The ultimate proof that the Truth is the Truth is not in the witness of men- be they archaeologists, scientists, good friends or who. The real witness of God is deep in yourself. " Taste and see, that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8) is the most powerful appeal. John is using a legal word for " witness" . There is, of course, something intentionally contradictory here. For a witness must be independent of yourself. You can't really be a valid witness to yourself. But the Lord said that He was a witness of Himself, and this witness was valid (Jn. 8:14-18). We, too, John is saying, can be a valid witness to ourselves that our faith is genuine. Our personal experience of the Lord Jesus *is* valid. Paul proves the resurrection of Jesus by saying that " he has risen indeed" exactly

because he (Paul) has seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15). This is the kind of 'evidence' we tend to fight shy of. But our personal experience of the Lord Jesus *is* a valid prop to our faith.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-3Mutuality_Between_God_And_Man.htm

June 19Jdg 21

“All the people”, male and female, rich or poor, slave or affluent materialist, High Priest or mentally retarded cripple were all in covenant relationship with God (Ex.19:11). Thus women as well as men had to travel to the tabernacle to keep the feasts (Dt.12:12,18; 16:11,14). The Bible emphasizes how these commands were kept in practice; hence Jud.21:9-23 shows how it was well known that women would be present at the feasts, and 1 Sam.1 and 2:19 describe Hannah and Peninnah going up to keep the feasts each year. Local religions did not have this feature. The covenant was between their god and the leaders of the nations. “That which distinguishes the God of Israel from the gods of the (surrounding) nations is, among other traits, his condescension to the humble; he deigns to establish his covenant with the children, the women and the slaves”. Thus “Judaism...guarantees women a standing before God which they did not have in any heathen religious relationship”.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/10-1-5women_and_the_law_of_moses.htm

Isa 43

In the context of Israel’s final repentance, God speaks of how every one of the Jewish people has been potentially created for His glory, because they carry His Name (Is. 43:7). Although Israel have been “quenched as a wick” for their sins (Is. 43:17 RVmg.), we are to realize that the wick is still smouldering, and are to follow the Lord’s example of never totally quenching it but instead seek to fan the wick of Israel back into life (Is. 42:3). God works with whatever spirituality we and others can offer Him. And we should do likewise in our dealing with others.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a5.htm>

2Jo, 3Jo

That we can’t be secret believers is brought out by 2 Jn. 7 [Gk.]. Anyone who does not confess publicly that Jesus came in the flesh is described by John as a deceiver and even anti-Christ. The French [Segond version] is clearest: “ne declarent pas publiquement”. Whilst the passage is open to a number of interpretations, in our context the point perhaps is that to secretly believe in Christ isn’t possible- it must in some way be declared publicly or else we are “deceivers”.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

June 20Ruth 1, 2

Jesus stresses to the disciples that their Father is His Father, and their God is His God (Jn. 20:18). He appears to be alluding here to Ruth 1:16 LXX. Here, Ruth is urged to remain behind in Moab [cp. Mary urging Jesus?], but she says she will come with her mother in law, even though she is of a different people, and “Your people shall be my people, and your God

my God". This allusion would therefore be saying: 'OK I am of a different people to you now, but that doesn't essentially affect our *relationship*; I so love you, I will always stick with you wherever, and my God is your God'.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-19.htm>

Isa 44

The way God showed such grace and imputed righteousness to Jacob even before his birth is brought out in Is. 44:2, which states that from the womb, Jacob was chosen to be God's servant; and yet Jacob coolly said that only if God did what He promised, would he agree to serve Yahweh, and have Him as his master. Earlier in the same servant prophecies, the servant Jacob is described as a useless servant: " Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect (Jacob was a perfect / plain man, Gen. 25:27), and blind as the Lord's servant?" (Is. 42:19). Although the servant is worse than useless (a deaf messenger), he is seen as perfect by his Divine Master. And the servant prophecies are primarily based on Jacob (note, in passing, how often they associate the servant Jacob with idol worship, which seems to have been an earlier characteristic of Jacob). Consider too the allusions to Jacob in Is. 53; a man of sorrow and grief, despised of men, who would see his seed. As Christ felt a worm on the cross (Ps. 22:6), so Jacob is described (Is. 41:14). That even in his weakness, Jacob prefigured the Lord in his time of ultimate spiritual victory, shows in itself the way God imputed righteousness to him at the time. The whole basis of how God dealt with Jacob is intended to be an essay in the way in which He counts all the true Israel as righteous, even though they are not. Imputed righteousness is the key to our salvation by grace.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-6Jacob_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

Jude

We really can play a part in bringing salvation for others. Jude further catches the spirit of all this when he writes: " ...praying in the Holy Spirit...of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 20-23), just as the Angel had pulled Lot from the fire (Jude 7)- in this sense, Jude seems to suggest, we can do God's work for him. Likewise we must " make a difference" concerning some, just as the Angels " contended" [s.w.] for men (Jude 9 cp. 22). The fire of condemnation at the judgment is in a sense already kindled, as the Lord Himself had taught (Lk. 12:49). The weak brother condemns himself by his way of life, and falls into condemnation even now, before the judgment (James 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:6; Tit. 3:11). We see this, and have the power in some cases to save the brother by pulling him out of that fire of condemnation. Surely the point is that we can save our brother from condemnation at judgment day by what we prayerfully do for him now.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/9-4power_of_preaching.htm

June 21 Ruth 3, 4

Ruth seems to me to be a wonderful example of a spiritually ambitious person. It was unheard of in those times for a woman to propose to a man; yet by coming to him, uncovering his feet and laying under his mantle, she was stating that she wished to see him as

a manifestation of God to her (Ruth 3:7,9 = Ruth 2:12). She went after him, following him (Ruth 3:10); the poor, landless Gentile aspired to be a part of a wealthy Jewish family, in order to fulfil the spirit of the Law. And she attained this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

Isa 45

There's an especially noteworthy thing which the sheer *height* of the Lord's exaltation leads us to. " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...wherefore...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:9-12). These words are alluding to Is. 45:23,24: " ...unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength" . We all find humility difficult. But before the height of His exaltation, a height which came as a result of the depth of the degradation of the cross, we should bow our knees in an unfeigned humility and realization of our sinfulness, and thankful recognition of the fact that through Him we are counted righteous. We will be prostrated in the day of judgment before Him, and yet will be made to stand. We therefore ought not to judge our brother who will likewise be made to stand in that day- to his Master he stands or falls, not to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-25Jesus_Is_Lord.htm

Rev 1, 2

A glance through the descriptions of the beasts- the Kingdoms of this world- reveals that they are all set up in terms of the Lord Jesus and *His* Kingdom. The opening vision of Rev. 1 presents the Lord in His post-resurrection glory; but elements of that description occur throughout Revelation in portraying the beasts. The point is, they are all false-Christ's. Their worlds are in collision with God's. The Lord has a voice as the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15), but the serpent, on the surface, speaks with just the same voice (Rev. 12:15). The four empire-beasts of Dan. 7 are a parody of the four living creatures of the cherubim (Rev. 4:6). The rejected man who built greater barns, such was his blessing, would have thought that he was receiving the blessings of righteousness (Prov. 3:10). There was a cruel and subtle confusion between the wicked and righteous. Israel actually fell for this; they came to describe the Egypt they had been called out from as the land flowing with milk and honey (Num. 16:13). And so we have the same tendency to be deceived into thinking that the world around us is effectively the Kingdom of God, the only thing worth striving after.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-6-4Worlds_In_Collision.htm

June 221Sa 1

God's face looks at the righteous if He accepts them (Ps. 11:7; 13:1)- and God turning His face toward men is a very common idiom for Him answering prayer (e.g. 1 Sam. 1:11). Thus acceptability with God and Him answering our prayers are related. The experience of answered prayer is a great confirmation for our faith.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

Isa 46, 47

To know God is to love Him, and to want to be like Him; there is something compulsive and magnetic about who He is. The knowledge of God elicits quite naturally a merciful spirit (Hos. 6:6). To “learn righteousness” is the result of beholding [after the pattern of Moses] the majesty of the Name (Is. 26:10). And so Is. 46:5-9 appeals for Israel to repent simply because God really is God; they were to “remember this” that they already knew, and “bring it again to mind” that God is really the great eternal, and His Name is as it is. And they that know His Name will put their trust in Him, day by day, as we cough and hack our way through these few years towards His eternal Kingdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-6The_Unity_of_God.html

Rev 3, 4

The Lord knocking on the door and 'coming' when the believer opens, hints at His second coming once the ecclesia shows a suitable level of spiritual response (Rev. 3:20). In the same letter to Laodicea, the ecclesia being "rich and increased with goods" (3:17) recalls the days of Lot and Noah, both typical of the second coming, and the unworthy walking naked is a figure picked up in ch. 16:15 concerning judgment day. A study of the letters from this angle reveals many other reasons for thinking that they have particular application to the believers living just prior to the Lord's return.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/25.htm>

June 231Sa 2

Some prophecies simply won't come true because they refer to what God had potentially prepared for His people, but they disallow Him from giving them what He had intended. Thus Eli was told of “all the wealth which God would have given Israel”, which his behaviour had now disallowed (1 Sam. 2:32 AVmg.). Knowing this, women like Hannah clearly hoped and prayed that their sons would be Messiah (1 Sam. 2:10 = Ps. 89:24); for they perceived that God's purpose was open to such a thing. This is how much God weights human response in His operation on this earth.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-2Human_Response.htm

Isa 48

The offer of rest was rejected by the exiles then; but is taken up now by all who accept Christ, realizing that they are in the same state as the exiles in Babylon. “Come out from among them and be ye separate” (2 Cor. 6:17) is picking up the language of Is. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; Zech. 2:7 concerning the return of the exiles from Babylon. The edict of Cyrus for the Jews to return to the land is in a sense pointing forward to God's command to us to leave the spirit of Babylon, the Gentile world, and go up to do His work. The returned exiles are us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-11The_Returned_Exiles.htm

Rev 5, 6

Silhouetted within the vision of the judgment throne is a slain lamb (Rev. 5:6), as if before the judgment, all will be aware of the Lord's sacrifice. The accepted will utter praise immediately after realizing the wonderful verdict pronounced for them- in terms of praising the Lord Jesus for his sacrifice, and recognizing their eternal debt to the blood of His cross (Rev. 5:9). The cross and the judgment and reward are connected. This is why the Sephardim called the Day of Atonement, with all its typology of the cross, "the day of judgment". Our reflections upon the cross are in a sense our judgment- hence the connection between them in the description of the breaking of bread in 1 Cor. 11:23-29.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_3.htm

June 241Sa 3

God is His word. The word "is" God in that God is so identified with His word. David parallels trusting in God and trusting in His word (Ps. 56:3,4). By *our* words we personally will be condemned or justified- because we too 'are' our words. When Samuel told Eli of the prophetic vision which he had received, Eli commented: "It is the Lord" (1 Sam. 3:18). He meant 'It is the word of the Lord'; but he saw God as effectively His word. "The word", the "word of the Kingdom", "the Gospel", "the word of God" are all parallel expressions throughout the Gospels. Our attitude to God's word is our attitude to Him. Hence the challenge to daily meditate upon it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/1-3-4the_word_was_god.htm

Isa 49

Paul was told by Jesus that all those whom he had persecuted were in fact Jesus personally (Acts 9:5). And this idea of the believer being so totally bound up with his or her Lord continues with Paul throughout his life. Thus he takes a prophecy concerning how Christ personally would be the light of the whole world (Is. 49:6), and applies it to himself in explanation of why he was devoted to being a light to the whole world *himself* (Acts 13:47- although 26:23 applies it to Jesus personally). Paul even says that this prophecy of Christ as the light of the world was a *commandment* to him; all that is true of the Lord Jesus likewise becomes binding upon us, because we are *in* Him. Note that Paul says that God has commanded *us* to witness; it wasn't that Paul was a special case, and God especially applied Isaiah's words concerning Christ as light of the Gentiles to Paul. They apply to *us*, to all who are in Christ. And when on trial, Paul explained *his* preaching to the Jews "and then to the Gentiles" as being related to the fact that he had to "shew" the Gospel to them because Christ rose from the dead to "shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:20,23). In other words, he saw his personal preaching as shewing forth the light of Jesus personally.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

Rev 7-9

We can judge ourselves unworthy. It's been observed that the tribe of Dan is excluded from the list of the redeemed tribes in Rev. 7. Dan didn't take possession of their inheritance; they despised it. And so they excluded themselves, rather than being excluded for e.g. bad behaviour. The other tribes all had their moments of terrible failures; but these didn't exclude

them. The only one excluded was the one who didn't want to be there. Ultimately those who truly love the appearing of Jesus will be accepted by Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

June 251Sa 4

Eli *did* rebuke his sons; but in God's eyes he didn't (1 Sam. 2:24 cp. 3:13 AV mg.). He said words for the sake of saying words, but in his heart he didn't frown upon them. Eli appeared to discipline his sons. But he couldn't have really done this from his heart, or he wouldn't have been condemned for not controlling them. He honoured his sons above God, to make himself "fat with the chiefest of all the offerings". The description of Eli as being fat surely reflects his guilt (1 Sam. 2:29; 4:18). And yet he appeared on the surface to run his family life on a spiritual footing. We urgently need to search our motives, given the example of the condemnation of Eli- an apparently kindly, faithful old man.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-8Genuine_Motives.htm

Isa 50

The Lord set His face to go to Jerusalem, and the final sacrifice which would be there (Lk. 9:51). He hardened His face like a rock (Is. 50:7); and yet the wicked similarly harden their faces like a rock to go in the way of the flesh (Jer. 5:3). We are hardened in our path, one way or the other. Jeremiah had his face hardened in response to his own hardening of face (Jer. 1:17; 5:3), and the wicked in Israel likewise were hardened (Jer. 3:3; 4:30).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-8-1The_Two_Roads_In_Proverbs.htm

Rev 10, 11

To hold and present the Truth of God, with all its exclusivity, its implicit criticism of all that isn't true, *in a genuine humility*...this has a drawing power all of its own. The two witnesses of Rev. 11:3 make their witness [and will make it during the latter day tribulation?] "clothed in sackcloth"- a symbol of repentance and recognition of sin (Gen. 37:34; Jer 4:8; Jonah 3:5; Mk. 2:20). Their own personal repentance and acceptance of God's gracious forgiveness was the basis of their appeal to others. And is it going too far to understand that if these "two witnesses" do indeed represent the latter day witness of true Christianity, it will be made on the basis of a genuine repentance by us, brought about by the experiences of the holocaust to come?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

June 261Sa 5, 6

That a man should betray the Lord Jesus just for a bit of money is incredible- almost. But this is the iron grip of the snare of riches. And our community is littered with the spiritual wrecks of those who have likewise been snared by their pursuit of wealth, on whatever level. And Scripture brings before us so many others: Hezekiah is one of the more tragic. One reason why Israel failed to drive out the tribes, and thereby lost the Kingdom, was simply because they wanted to take tribute from them (Josh. 17:13). Ez. 7:19 defines "silver and gold" as

Israel's stumblingblock- more so than idols. They just so loved wealth. The men of Bethshemesh looked into the ark to see if there were any more jewels left in it (1 Sam. 6:19 cp. 6,15); they trampled upon the supreme holiness of God in their crazed fascination with wealth. The early corruption of Christianity was due to false teachers who like Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15); they taught false doctrine "for filthy lucre's sake" (Tit. 1:11). Time and again the NT warns against elders who would be motivated by the love of "filthy lucre" rather than the Lord Jesus and His people (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2). The Greek translated "filthy lucre" is hard to understand; it doesn't just mean 'money'. It suggests profit that is somehow filthy, morally disgusting. This is what money turns into, in God's eyes, when men so love it. Will our natural love of wealth stop us from entering God's Kingdom?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-3The_Snare_Of_Riches.htm

Isa 51

Knowledge, in its active and true sense, does have a vital part to play. Otherwise spirituality becomes pure emotion alone. To "follow after righteousness" is paralleled with "to know righteousness" (Is. 51:1,7). To know it properly is to follow after it. The disciples were rebuked as being "of little faith" in the matter of not *understanding* the Lord's teaching about leaven (Mt. 16:8-11). It has been commented that the sayings of Jesus "are everywhere too subtly penetrated with theological claims and dogmatical instruction for the distinction commonly drawn between Christian "ethics" and Christian "dogma" to be other than forced or artificial". His doctrines lead to His practice. Doctrine is likened by the Lord to yeast- it is going to affect the holder of it (Mt. 16:11,12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/1-1importance_of_truth.htm

Rev 12, 13

The names of the Roman emperors were to be greatly revered. The cult of emperor worship grew very strongly in the 1st century. Yet Rev. 13:2 describes the names of the leaders of the beast, which on one level represented the Roman empire in the 1st century, as "*blasphemous names*". To assign divine titles to the emperor was, to the Jewish and Christian mind, a blasphemy (Dt. 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:4). This would have made the Apocalypse an outlawed document in the first century. Consider too the clear references to the evil of the emperor worship cult later in Rev. 13: *one of its heads*. . . is set up as the very opposite of the true Christ. Like the Lamb, who was killed and then raised up (5:6), the Beast seems to disappear and then return to life (17:8). This passage may be a reference to some definite event, such as the murder of Caesar and the healing of the empire under Augustus, the legend of *Nero redivivus*, whereby Nero was believed to have returned from the dead. The marvellous cure of the Beast excites admiration and leads to the adoration of the dragon and the Beast (17:8). This is an allusion to the rapid progress of the emperor cult and to the ready acceptance of the immoral example of the emperors. The beast of the earth in Rev. 13:11-18 seems to have some application to the cult of emperor worship which became so popular throughout the Roman empire: it speaks in the voice of the dragon (v. 11), from whom it receives its power; and like the first Beast, it attempts to mimic the Lamb (v. 12, 13). It seems to be a personification of an Antichrist embodied in the pagan priesthood, which endeavoured to draw all men to the cult of the emperor. In these thoughts we see just how radical was the Apocalypse in its first century context.

“The image to the beast” (13:13) would refer to representations of the divinized Roman emperors. “The wound of the sword” (13:13) is possibly an allusion to the mortal wound Nero inflicted upon himself in ad 68. Nero was perceived to live again in the persecutor Domitian (Tertullian, *Apol.* 5). Note how it is “the beast” who appears to have died or been wounded and then revives (17:8)- and yet these are references to what happened to Nero. The symbolism correctly perceives how the empire was incarnated in one man, the emperor. Our call today to be radically separate from this world, whatever it costs, is just the same. The events of the first century are to be repeated in the last days.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-4-5Roman_Empire_And_Christianity.htm

June 271Sa 7, 8

Real prayer is not merely an emotional outburst fuelled by the self-preservation instinct. This is a fine challenge to our excuses that we don't have or don't need much time to pray. As the Philistines closed in upon Israel, Samuel was busy offering up the burnt offering, symbolizing Israel's plea to God for help (1 Sam. 7:10)- when the natural reaction would have been to think ‘Enough of that, come on, do something practical now...’. The widows who were financially supported by the early ecclesias gave themselves to constant prayer (1 Tim. 5:5 and context). In view of the way believers fall away and also because of our great duty to witness to the world, *first of all* (i.e. most importantly), *prayer* must be made (1 Tim. 2:1 and context). Indeed, it is an actual sin- albeit a sin of omission- to cease to pray for our brethren (1 Sam. 12:23).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3.htm>

Isa 52

n Rom 15:21, Paul justifies his preaching by quoting from part of the suffering servant prophecy in Is. 52 / 53. That whole passage is set in a context of explaining “how beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings...all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Is. 52:7,10). The preaching of good tidings and the declaration of God's salvation was through the crucifixion. Paul quotes Is. 52:15: “To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand”. This was Paul's justification for taking the Gospel to where Christ has not been named. Note in passing how the Lord Jesus sees us as “beautiful” in our witness to Him (as in Song 7:1). Yet further into Is. 53, so much else jumps out at us as appropriate to Paul's preaching: “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high [cp. Paul knowing how to be exalted and abased, themes that occur in Is. 53 about Jesus' death]. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man [cp. Paul's thorn in the flesh?], and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for [that] which had not been told them shall they see; and [that] which they had not heard shall they consider”. Paul appeared before Agrippa, Festus, and one or two Caesars, with a visage marred by his evangelistic sufferings. The connection is surely clear- the preaching of the Gospel is a form of death and crucifixion, in order to bring forth a harvest in others. Are *we* suffering for the sake of the Gospel...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-3paul_preaching_christ.htm

Rev 14

It could be that this conversion of all men occurs during the final tribulation (Rev. 14:6); but it seems to me that the context demands that people from every nation etc. are already redeemed in Christ and await His return. It seems highly doubtful to me that over the past 2,000 years, the Truth has been taken to every ethnos, tribe, clan, custom and language, especially in Africa and Asia. So it follows that only once *we* have done it in our generation will this come true. The brethren in those parts especially have work to do yet, it seems to me. And we should all support them as best we can. I have a real belief that given the current rate of progress in preaching, the current generation *could* witness literally world-wide representation of Christians believing true, sound Biblical doctrine- *if we all* do our bit. And it seems no accident that representatives from so many nations can be preached to in cities like London, New York, Sydney... where the Truth has been so long established. It is very difficult for me to reproduce in writing the kind of picture I have in my mind. But it is a thrilling and all consuming, all-demanding vision.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/18.htm>

June 281Sa 9

What we hear in the ear, that we must preach on the housetops (Mt. 10:27). This is built on the language of 1 Sam. 9:15,25, where God speaks in Samuel's ear, and then he speaks that word to Saul on the housetop. The Lord is saying that in essence, we are all in Samuel's position; we hear the word of this world's salvation, the word about "the Kingdom" as it was for Saul, and that very fact is in itself the imperative to overcome our natural reservations and share it with those for whom it is intended- even if, as with Saul, we consider them unlikely and unspiritual hearers.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

Isa 53

The cross of Jesus was ongoing, in essence, in His life. Jn. 12:38 speaks of how the Jews refused to believe in Jesus whilst He was still alive- and yet by doing so, John says, they fulfilled Is. 53:1: "Who hath believed our report". But the "report" there was clearly the message of the cross. It's as if John applies a clear prophecy about the cross to people's response to Jesus during His lifetime. His blood is a symbol both of His cross and of the life He lived. He took our infirmities upon Him on the cross, and yet He had done this in His ministry by healing sicknesses (Is. 53:4 = Mt. 8:17). His whole life was a being acquainted with grief (Is. 53:3); and yet we read in this same context that He was put to grief in His death (:10). The grief of His death was an extension of the grief of His life. "Who hath believed our report?" (Is. 53:1) was fulfilled by the Jewish rejection of Him in His life, as well as in His death (Jn. 12:38). "He bore the sin of many" (Is. 53:12) is applied by Jn. 1:29 to how during His ministry, Jesus bore the sin of the world. He was glorified in His death (although the world didn't see it that way), as well as in His life (Jn. 12:23,29). The life of cross carrying isn't about a few dramatic moments of decision- it's a spirit of life each moment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-4-2ongoing_crucifixion_and_death.htm

Rev 15, 16

God's judgments are now made manifest (Rom. 1:19) in that we know His word, His judgments; in advance of how they *will* be made manifest in the future judgment (Rev. 15:4). So the outcome of the day of judgment needn't be a mystery to us!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

June 29 1Sa 10

David learnt the secret of seeing the positive in our weak brethren, and he didn't let all that was wrong with Saul interfere with this. He describes himself as responding to criticism like this: "I as a deaf man, heard not" (Ps. 38:13). Yet he was alluding to how Saul, when likewise criticized by "sons of belial", "was as though he had been deaf" to their words (1 Sam. 10:27 RVmg.). He saw the good in Saul, he remembered that one good example he showed- and it empowered him to follow it. This is all the more remarkable, in that it seems God would have given Saul into David's hand when "a deep sleep from the Lord" fell upon Saul at the very time David intended to kill him (1 Sam. 26:12). Saul himself realized that the Lord had delivered him into David's hand to kill him (1 Sam. 24:18). God thus confirmed David in his intentions- and yet at the last minute, it seems, David chose an even higher level; of love and deep respect for this spiritually sick man.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-3-2David_And_Saul.htm

Isa 54

Isaiah had explained (Is. 54:7) that although God and Israel had departed from each other, they would come together again by Israel being regathered- i.e. by their return from Babylon to the land. And perhaps Hosea was rewritten at the same time, as an appeal for the Jews to 'return' to their God, i.e. to return to Judah. And yet, so tragically, whilst they all avowed their allegiance to Yahweh, generously supported the few who did return... the majority of the Jews didn't return to their God. They chose the soft life in Babylon, where they remained. It's why the close of the book of Esther is so sad- the Jews are there in prosperity and popularity in Babylon, no longer weeping by the rivers of Babylon. And will we this day decide to return to God, or will we remain in Babylon?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Rev 17, 18

If we are not separate from this world now, we will not be separated from them when the judgments fall. If we don't come out from Babylon, we will share her judgments (Rev. 18:4). The Lord taught that the believer who makes his brother stumble should have a millstone hung around his neck and be cast into the sea (Lk. 17:2). This is exactly Babylon's judgment (Rev. 18:21). The unloving in the ecclesia will be treated like the unloving world whose spirit they share. The rejected will weep and gnash their teeth (Mt. 25:30)- and be sent back into the Babylon-world, where they are also weeping and angry (Rev. 18:15,19). As the tree of Babylon will be cut down, so will the rejected be (Dan. 4:14,23 = Mt. 7:19). As Babylon is burnt with fire (Rev. 18:8), and indeed the whole 'world' too (2 Pet. 3:10), so will the rejected be (Mt. 13:40 etc.). But acting in a Babylon way means making our brother stumble!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

June 301Sa 11, 12

If all Israel had been obedient, then Saul would have been too (1 Sam. 12:14). If a majority are spiritually minded, this can at times and in some ways influence a potentially weaker minority; even though the reverse is more often true. And yet Saul made the people “follow him trembling” because they weren’t, *en masse*, spiritually stronger than him (1 Sam. 13:7). All this reflects the huge power of example. And what example will we be this day?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

Isa 55

We must believe, really and truly, that the word will not return void, but it will accomplish what it is intended to achieve. We are not scattering seed with the vague hope that something might sprout up; we are planting, fully expecting to see a harvest. The apparent dearth of response to some preaching therefore poses a challenging question. Are we preaching the word of God alone, or our own ideas? Does God withhold blessing for some reason unknown to us? Is this parable only part of a wider picture, in which somehow the word *does* return void due to man’s rejection? Thus the word of God was ‘made void’ by the Pharisees (Mk. 7:13 RV- a conscious allusion to Is. 55:11?).... This is perhaps one of the most defiantly unanswerable questions in our experience. As an aside, one possible explanation is that “the word” which is sent forth and prospers, achieving all God’s intention, is in fact Messiah. The same word is used about the ‘prospering’ of the Servant in His work: Is. 48:15; 53:10 cp. Ps. 45:4. Another is to accept the LXX reading of this passage: “...until whatsoever I have willed shall have been accomplished”. Here at least is the implication that *something* happens and is achieved when we preach God’s word. The same idiom occurs in Ez. 9:11 AVmg., where we read that “the man clothed with linen”- representing Ezekiel or his representative Angel- “returned the word, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me”. The word ‘returned’ in the sense that someone, somewhere, was obedient to it even if others weren’t.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/7.htm>

Rev 19, 20

the devil and beast will be cast to the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10), as will all the rejected (Rev. 20:15); they will go to the same place. As Satan is bound (Rev. 20:2), so will the rejected be (Mt. 13:30; 22:13). This will be the antitype of Zedekiah being bound in condemnation (Jer. 52:11). In all these things, we have a choice: to fall on the stone of Christ and be broken, or live proudly in this life without breaking our fleshly ways at all, until at the Lord's coming we are ground to powder (Mt. 21:44). This is an obvious allusion to the image of the Kingdoms of men being ground to powder by the Lord's return. The Lord was saying that if we won't be broken now, then we will share the judgments of the world, and be broken by Him then in condemnation.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/7.htm>

1 July

1 Sam. 13

If all Israel had been obedient, then Saul would have been too (1 Sam. 12:14). If a majority are spiritually minded, this can at times and in some ways influence a potentially weaker minority; even though the reverse is more often true. And yet Saul made the people "follow him trembling" because they weren't, *en masse*, spiritually stronger than him (1 Sam. 13:7). This is the power of influence.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

Is. 56, 57

Israel should have been just and not abusive of their brethren, precisely because "my salvation is near to come" (Is. 56:1). We are to do righteousness, because God's righteousness is about to be revealed (Is. 56:1 RV). We seek to live the Kingdom life now, seeing we will so soon, by grace, be living it anyway.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-12Jesus_Is_Coming_Soon.htm

Rev. 21, 22

Grasping God's view of time means that we will see the Kingdom as immortality, not everlasting life. The eternity of our future existence is not the big theme of the Bible; it is "God manifestation, not human salvation", in the words of John Thomas. The process of eternity, the life and Kingdom of God, is already going on now; the tree of life *is* now (not 'will be'; Greek tenses are precise) in the midst of the paradise of God, at least from God's perspective (Rev. 2:7). We will have no need of the sun, for the light of God's glory will replace our concept of time (Rev. 21:23). Indeed, "the time of the end" can be read as "the end of time" (Dan. 12:4,9). There will be "time (Gk. *chronos*, the idea of time) no longer" (Rev. 10:6).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-1God_and_Time.html

2 July

1 Sam. 14

Jonathan was doubtless teetering on the edge of whether to take up Goliath's challenge. As the King's senior son and the young, dynamic army general (13:2), surely he was the obvious Hebrew champion to match Goliath. And moreover, Jonathan had risen to a similar challenge in 1 Sam. 14, when he and his armourbearer took on the might of the Philistine army singlehanded, in a supreme act of faith. The question arises: Why didn't Jonathan do the same again when faced with the Goliath crisis? Presumably his faith was capable of one-off flashes of brilliance in certain situations, but in cold blood, as an act of the will, Jonathan's faith just didn't stay at the peak he achieved in 1 Sam. 14. Truly and fully can we empathize with that man. His sense of failure in not rising up to Goliath's challenge made him appreciate David's victory much more deeply. Again, exact ditto for us in our response to the cross. As Jonathan wrought great salvation in Israel in 1 Sam. 14:45, so did David (the same phrase occurs in 19:5). As Saul tried to kill an innocent Jonathan out of jealousy of his victory, so he did David- thus Jonathan shared the sufferings of David, as we do of Christ. Another example of

this will be found in 20:33, where Saul tries to kill Jonathan with a javelin, as he did to David. Yet wonderfully, David seems to have counted Jonathan *as if* he actually had been the champion against Goliath; he describes him as "the mighty" (2 Sam.1:27), using the same Hebrew word translated "champion" in 17:51 concerning Goliath. Likewise Christ shares his victory with us to the extent that he counts us *as if* we were the victors on Calvary.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-2-1David_And_Jonathan.htm

Is. 58

There are many connections within Isaiah between the servant songs, and the descriptions of the people of Israel into which the songs are interspersed. The saviour-servant was to bring out the prisoners from the dungeons (Is. 42:7), so was every Israelite "to let the oppressed go free...loose the bonds", and to "undo the bands of the [heavy] yoke" (Is. 58:6) as Christ did (Mt. 11:28,29); His work of deliverance is to be replicated by each of us in our witness. Whoever is in Him will by this very fact follow Him in this work. In Isaiah's first context, the suffering servant was King Hezekiah. Yet all Israel were to see themselves as 'in' him, as spiritual Israel are to see themselves as in Christ. "He was oppressed", as Israel at that time were being "oppressed" by Assyria. As they were covered in wounds and spiritual sickness (Is. 1:5,6), so the suffering servant bore their diseases and rose again in salvation victory.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-1-2Witnessing_For_Christ.html

Mt. 1, 2

The descriptions of Mary as keeping things in her heart (Lk. 2:19,52), and the way it seems she didn't tell Joseph about the Angel's visit, but instead immediately went down to Elisabeth for three months...all these are indications that Mary, like many sensitive people, was a very closed woman. Only when Mary was "found" pregnant by Joseph (Mt. 1:18- s.w. to see, perceive, be obvious) was the situation explained to him by an Angel. It seems His move to divorce her was based on his noticing she was pregnant, and she hadn't given any explanation to him. Do you feel lonely and closed as a person? You're in good Biblical company.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-2-1loneliness_of_mary.htm

July 3

1 Sam. 15

How are we to understand the 'Language of limitation' which Scripture abounds with- e.g. Gen. 2:2; Ex. 31:17; Dt. 32:20,27? God is almighty, knowing the end from the beginning. As such, he does not "repent" (change His mind). Yet there are ample examples of where God *does* do just this. 1 Sam. 15:28,29,35 is a classic. What is the explanation?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-7-1-2Examples_Of_Bible_Study.htm

Is. 59

United with Christ a man can face the judgment unafraid, released from the paralyzing terror of wondering all through his life if he would be accepted or rejected at the last. For us, judgment ought to be perceived as salvation. Indeed, these two ideas are paralleled in Is. 59:16,17. Israel looked for judgment, but there was none; for salvation, but it was far from them (Is. 59:11). In this sense judgment to come is a comfort not a threat. Ps. 135:14 parallels the Lord judging His people with Him feeling sorry for them (Heb.).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

Mt. 3, 4

Scripture abounds with examples of powerful preachers whose witness was motivated by a deep recognition of their desperation before God. John the Baptist said that he was the herald of Jesus, but he was not worthy (“sufficient”, RVmg, Mt. 3:17) to even undo the Lord’s shoe latchet (Jn. 1:27). He was saying that he did undo the Lord’s shoe, using an idiom which meant ‘to announce beforehand’- but he did it unworthily, with a deep sense of his own deep insufficiency. In saying this he was alluding back to the Law’s statement that the man who was unable to bring redemption to his dead brother’s family must undo a shoe latchet (Dt. 25:9). John deeply felt this, hence his use of the figure- and in this spirit he preached the redemption that is alone in Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-2bent_knees_wet_eyes.htm

July 4

1 Sam. 16

The Hebrew language reflects certain realities about the nature of God’s ways. The common Hebrew word for ‘to see’, especially when used about God’s ‘seeing’, means also ‘to provide’. Abraham comforted Isaac that “God will see for himself [AV ‘provide’] the lamb” (Gen. 22:8 RVmg.); and thus the RVmg. interprets ‘Jehovah Jireh’ as meaning ‘the Lord will see, or provide’ (Gen. 22:14). The same word is used when Saul asks his servants to “provide” him a man (1 Sam. 16:17). When Hagar said “Thou God seest me” (Gen. 16:13) she was expressing her gratitude for His *provision* for her. What this means in practice is that the fact God sees and knows all things means that He can and will therefore and thereby provide for us in the circumstances of life; for He sees and knows all things.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/alcohol/alcohol_b1.htm

Is. 60

There is reason to think that it could have been possible for the Messianic Kingdom to have been established at the time of the restoration, and the temple prophecies would fit perfectly into this context. Ezra was in a position to fulfil those prophecies, although the bulk of his brethren seem to have precluded this. Ezra was enabled to “beautify” the temple (Ezra 7:27), the very same word used in Is. 60:7,9,13 about how God would “glorify” [s.w.] His temple with merchandise from throughout the Babylonian empire- all of which was willingly offered by Cyrus and Darius. So much too has been made potentially possible for us this day!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-5Potential_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

Mt. 5

The least in the Kingdom will be those who break commandments and teach men so (Mt. 5:19); but the least in the Kingdom will be counted greater than John the Baptist was in this life (Mt. 11:11). The simple message is that there will be some in the Kingdom who simply weren't very obedient in this their day of probation. Admittedly, these details are capable of other interpretations. But bear these points in mind, especially if you ever struggle with the apparent harshness of some Christians you may meet.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-8Parables_Of_Judgment.htm

July 5

1 Sam. 17

David must be one of the greatest types of Christ. At this time of the David and Goliath conflict he was a shepherd, despised by his brethren, trying to save Israel at a time of dire physical suffering and spiritual apostasy. These connections alone should make us scan this record for deeper Messianic allusions. The giant strongman falling to the earth because of a stone suggests Nebuchadnezzar's image of Dan.2, where the stone refers to Christ. Note how lion and bear (17:34 cp. Dan.7:4,5) and brass and iron (17:5-7 cp. Dan.2:32,33) are all mentioned in the record. Goliath's death by a fatal wound in the head (1 Sam.17:49) must look back to Gen.3:15, again connecting David and the stone with the seed of the woman (Christ) and equating Goliath with the seed of the serpent. This is confirmed by the repetitious description of Goliath in battle with David four times as covered in "brass" from head to foot (17:5,6); which is the same word translated "serpent" and is a symbol of sin. According to some etymologists, "Philistine" fundamentally means 'one who rolls in the dust', i.e. a serpent; and significantly, Goliath is several times described as "the Philistine". Six being the number of the flesh it is significant that his "height was six cubits and a span...his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels" (17:4,7). Work through 1 Sam. 17 and see how the type develops.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-1David_And_Goliath.htm

Is. 61

Is. 61:11 compares God to soil- the ground, from which He made man. This is an example of God's modesty, His humility. If *He* can be humble, then how much more should we be...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Mt. 6

When the Lord spoke of the impossibility of serving two masters, He personified the one as "Mammon", the antithesis of God. He goes on to define what he meant: "Therefore...take no thought for your life...which of you by taking thought....why take ye thought for raiment...therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat?...seek ye first the Kingdom of God...take therefore no thought for the morrow" (Mt. 6:24,25,27,28,31,33,34). Clearly the Lord saw "Mammon", this personified anti-God, as an attitude of mind. He had the same

view of 'Satan' as we do: a personification of sin in the human mind. He also saw seeking "the Kingdom of God" as somehow parallel with serving God rather than mammon. We would wish there were some third category, God, mammon and something in between; as we may idly speculate that it would suit us if there were three categories at judgement day, accepted, rejected, and something else. But both then and now, this very minute, this isn't the case. A deep down recognition of this will have its effect practically. If we are serving God, let's not give anything to mammon, let's not play games, juggling and using brinkmanship.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/a3The_12th_Imam.htm

July 6

1 Sam. 18

Paul, once known as Saul, earnestly resolved to be like King Saul was at the beginning. When he describes himself as "anointed" (2 Cor. 1:21) he surely had his eye on 1 Sam. 15:17 again; when Saul was "little in his own eyes", he was anointed. Paul tried to learn the lessons from Saul, and re-apply Saul's characteristics in a righteous context. Thus Saul was jealous (1 Sam. 18:8; 19:1), and Paul perhaps had his eye on this when he describes himself as jealous for the purity of the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:2). "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19) is surely a reference back to Saul's *disobedience* (1 Sam. 15:22). Hence Saul changed his name to Paul, "the little one", in seeking to imitate how Saul initially was. Do Bible characters have this big an influence upon *us*?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-8-2Paul_And_king_Saul.htm

Is. 62

There is a mutuality between God and His children in prayer. We 'make mention' of things to God (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2; Philemon 4). The Greek word used has the idea of bringing to mind, or remembering things to God. And He in response 'remembers' prayer when He answers it (Lk. 1:54,72; Acts 10:31 s.w.). What we bring to our mind in prayer, we bring to His mind. Those who pray for Jerusalem "keep not silence"- and therefore they give God "no rest" (Is. 62:6,7). But the Hebrew word for "keep not silence" and for 'give no rest' is one and the same! There's a clear play on words here. If we give ourselves no rest in prayer, then we give God no rest. His Spirit or mind becomes our spirit or mind, and vice versa. And hence the telling comments in Romans 8 about our spirit / mind being mediated to God in prayer through Jesus, in His role as 'the Lord the Spirit' (Rom. 8:26,27). Yet God Himself had stated that He will not rest nor hold His peace for Zion's sake (Is. 62:1). Yet His doing this is conditional upon His prayerful people not allowing Him to rest due to their prayers.

Note in passing how Paul speaks of 'making mention always' in prayer of his brethren (Philemon 4 etc.). This is clearly alluding to the Is. 62:6,7 passage, about always making mention of Jerusalem in prayer. But for Paul, the true city of God was now the scattered group of Christian believers around the Roman empire of the first century. Jewish minds would've picked up Paul's purposeful allusion to the 'always' prayers for Jerusalem; and would've marvelled that he saw the great holy city as now the bunch of guys whom he'd

baptized around the place, and that instead of a city, it was those very real men and women who filled his thoughts, prayers and yearnings. Paul saw himself indeed as the watchman upon Zion's walls- but watching over the people of God, not a physical city.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm

Mt. 7

The self-righteous Christian builder who appeared to make fast progress (Mt. 7:24-27), who apparently finds response to the word very easy, is contrasted with the builder whose progress appeared slow, building on a rock, symbolizing the difficulty he has in really hearing the word of the Lord Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-1-2SelfRighteous_Christians.htm

July 7

1 Sam. 19

Because of God's enthusiasm for human response to His ways, the exalted language in which He describes believers, even in their weakness, is a further essay in His humility. The way the Father runs to the prodigal and falls on his neck in tears is a superb essay in this (Lk. 15:20). Thus God "delighted" in Solomon (1 Kings 10:9)- translating a Hebrew word meaning literally 'to bend down to'. It's used about men in love (Gen. 34:19; Dt. 21:14; 25:7), and about Jonathan's deferential attitude to David (1 Sam. 19:2). We have mentioned that David especially recognized this humility of God. If *God* is in a way humble- what of us today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Is. 63

The language of Is. 63:1-5 applies with equal appropriacy to both the cross and the judgment. It is the time when the servant gains salvation and redemption for His people, alone, when all others have failed, with stained clothes reminiscent of Joseph's, with all their reference to the death and resurrection of the Lord... and this is far from the only example of where prophecies can apply to both the crucifixion and the final judgment. There seems to be a link made between the Lord's death and the judgment. As we reflect upon the cross this day, we have some foretaste of the future day of judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-3cross_and_the_judgment.htm

Mt. 8

There is fair emphasis that the rejected saints will be cast into darkness (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Jude 13). Yet darkness is a common symbol of the world (Eph. 5:11; 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:9). And those amongst us who won't love their brother are already in darkness, self-condemned even before the day arrives (1 Jn. 2:9,11).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

July 8

1 Sam. 20

Consider how the faithful speaking spiritually *to each other* was treated by God as a prayer to Him (Mal. 3:16). This may explain the enigmatic passage in 1 Sam. 20:12,13: " And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father...if there be good toward David and I send not unto thee [David]...and the Lord be with thee" . Jonathan's conversation with David seems to be merged with a prayer to God- perhaps indicating that the conversation was read by God as a prayer.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Is. 64

The intense degree to which God's Name really is called upon us is brought out in Is. 64:4. There we are told that no man has perceived "O God, beside Thee" what has been prepared for the saints. These words are quoted in 1 Cor. 2:9,10 concerning us, with the wondrous statement that God has revealed these things to us by His Spirit. Yet Is. 64:4 says that only God alone knows these things. But Paul says that they are also known by us, through God's Spirit. So through our association with the one Spirit, the one Name of Yahweh, what is true of God Himself on a personal level becomes true of us. Such is the wonder of the way in which His fullness dwells in us. God's Name alone is Yahweh (Ps. 83:18), yet this Name is now called upon us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-6The_Unity_of_God.html

Mt. 9

The Lord spoke of the spiritual harvest in 1st century Palestine as "plenteous" (Mt. 9:37). He uses the very same word translated "great" in the very frequent descriptions of the "great multitudes" of fascinated people who thronged Him (Mt. 12:15; 13:2; 14:14; 15:30; 19:2; 20:29). We would likely have been cynical of them and the depth of their interest. But if the Lord had had enough and strong enough [the Greek implies] labourers, those crowds would have been harvested as converts. Note too that the harvest is elsewhere the end of the world, and the workers who reap it are the Angels (Mt. 13:39). But in Mt. 9:37 and Jn. 4:35, the Lord says that the harvest was already ripe, and that the reapers are in fact us. Surely the point is that if we go out into this world with His hopefulness, aiming to reap in true converts, then we will be working with the Angels in this endeavour; and the point of conversion is in essence their entry into the things of the Kingdom. We too need to see the crowds of vaguely interested folks we deal with as a potential harvest for the Lord, their gathering into the garner dependent solely upon our working together with the Angels.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8.htm>

July 9

1 Sam. 21, 22

David's eager taking of the sword of Goliath (1 Sam. 21:9- "There is none like that; give it me") contrasts sadly with his earlier rejection of such weapons in order to slay Goliath. And David later reflects how he knew that his faithless taking of that sword and the shewbread would lead to the death of Abiathar's family (1 Sam. 22:22). But still he did it. Many have struggled to reconcile the statement that David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14) with the fact that his life contains many examples not only of failure, but of anger and a devaluing of human life. Let's learn from David's weakness in this area, and perceive the value of persons.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-5Character_Of_David.htm

Is. 65

The Kingdom will be fundamentally about the expression of God's spiritual characteristics, both in us and in the natural creation. All too easily we can focus on the *results* of this, such as there being no more war or famine, and that alone is our view of the Kingdom. "The Kingdom" becomes a hazy picture of an ideal world with none of the physical frustrations of the present order. But fundamentally, the Kingdom is about the triumph of God's righteousness over sin, it is about the supreme state of glory to God, given to Him by redeemed mankind.

We must ask the question: 'Why do I want to be in the Kingdom?'. It seems that there is a widely held perception of the Kingdom as a kind of glorified tropical holiday which stretches on for eternity, with palm trees blowing in the wind and exotic fruit dropping into our mouths. If this is why we want to be there, are we not downright selfish? Are we not striving to achieve a state of eternal personal happiness in terms of our present, worldly experience of life? We may look, for example, at the promise that "the former troubles (will be) forgotten" (Is. 65:15), and enthusiastically apply to the struggles of our present lives. But the context is concerning the "troubles" of sinful behaviour; we may well remember the physical activities of the past (with Divine nature it seems we certainly will); but like Israel we will forget our sins (Is. 54:4).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/27.htm>

Mt. 10

As Simeon held the baby Jesus in his arms, he saw in that beautiful little boy something terrible; for he looked ahead to how His soul would one day be pierced in crucifixion, "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk. 2:35). The same word is used for how thoughts will be revealed at the judgment (Mt. 10:26; 1 Cor. 3:13; 4:5). Thus our reflections

on the cross are a foretaste of the kinds of feelings we will have at the final judgment.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

July 10

1 Sam. 23

Psalm 54 was written when David received the news that the Ziphites had betrayed him. The reference to oppressors 'seeking after my soul / life' (Ps. 54:3) uses the same Hebrew words as in 1 Sam. 23:15, where Saul seeks for David's life at Ziph. It gives an insight into the mind of David; how he perceived himself, how he understood God. He was obviously in a desperate situation- he'd been betrayed, and Saul appeared certain now to corner him and kill him. He asks God of course to save him; he doesn't just resign himself to what looked like an impossible situation. He had the vision to believe that God *can* do miracles. He asks God to 'judge' him, to 'plead my cause' (Ps. 54:1 Heb.). There he was, just having received the news... and he prays, and composes a Psalm, right there and then. Composing poetry in the heat of the moment was his way of calming down and focusing his faith. That's not to say, of course, that he didn't later refine it and 'write it up' as it were.

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/7-2david and the ziphites.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/7-2david%20and%20the%20ziphites.htm)

Is. 66

As so often with reading the Gospels, it is profitable to imagine the tone of voice in which the Lord spoke the words which are recorded. " Go ye *into all the world* and preach the gospel to *every creature* ". If only we could sense the intensity of desire, the deepness of spiritual meaning, which His voice would have conveyed. We *must* have the spiritual ambition to take the Gospel to the whole world- no matter how small our world may be. The world of our street, of our town, nation- and as far as we are able, the whole planet. Paul had this ambition, quite apart from any personal commission he received. His desire to go to Spain (Rom. 15:24) indicates a commitment to taking the Gospel to the very ends of the world he then knew. He may well have been motivated in this by wishing to fulfil in spirit the Kingdom prophecy of Is. 66:18,19, which describes how Tarshish (which he would have understood as Spain) and other places which "have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory" will be witnessed to by those who *have* seen His glory and have "escaped" from God's just condemnation by grace. Paul sees this as referring to himself. For he speaks in Rom. 15:19 of his ambition to take the Gospel to Spain; and in that same context, of how he will bring the Gentile brethren's offering up to Jerusalem. This is precisely the context of Is. 66- the offerings of the Gentiles are to be brought up to Jerusalem, as a result of how the Lord's glory will be spoken of to all nations. So Paul read Isaiah 66 and did something about his Old Testament Bible study; he dedicated his life to taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, and he encouraged them to send their offerings to Jerusalem. He was no mere theologian, no academic missiologist. His study and exposition of Old Testament Scripture led to a life lived out in practice, to hardship, risk of life, persecution, loneliness, even rejection by his brethren. It is also significant in passing to note that Is. 66:19 speaks of nations which occur in the list of nations we have in Genesis 10, in the context of the effect of Babel. It is as if Paul sees the spreading of the Gospel as an undoing of the curse of Babel and the establishment of the Kingdom conditions described in Is. 66. By his preaching of God's Kingdom and the reign of Christ, he brought about a foretaste of the future Kingdom in the lives of his converts. And

we can do likewise. Note how once again, the preacher preaches from his personal experience; Paul takes the vision of glory which he has beheld to those who have not seen nor heard. Paul speaks of how he had preached the Gospel from Jerusalem " as far round as Illyricum" (Rom. 15:19). This was a Latin-speaking province. Was he not implying that he had preached throughout the Greek speaking world, and now wanted to take it into the Latin-speaking world? He wanted to preach to the regions beyond his previous limits (2 Cor. 10:15); his aim was to spend some time in Rome and then preach in Spain.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/semester2/5-4preaching_to_every_creature.htm

Mt. 11

I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" is surely a reference to the Lord's description of Himself as being, there and then, " meek and lowly of heart" (Mt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1). Paul's point is that as the Lord was in His life, so He is now, in His heavenly glory.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-11Paul_And_Christ.html

July 11

1 Sam. 24

Despite his undoubted physique stamina, David was a broken man, even quite early in his life, prone to fits of introspection; dramatic mood-swings (cp. 1 Sam.24:14 with 25:6,22,34;), sometimes appearing a real 'softie' but hard as nails at others (consider Ps.75:10 and the whole of Ps.101); easily getting carried away: be it with excessive emotional enthusiasm for bringing the ark back, in his harsh response to Hanun humbling his servants, his over-hasty and emotional decision to let Amnon go to Absalom's feast when it was obvious what might well transpire, his anger " flaring up" because of incompetency (2 Sam.11:20 NIV), or in his ridiculous softness for Absalom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-5Character_Of_David.htm

Jer. 1

Jeremiah speaks of how he came to see Israel for who they were: "The Lord made it known to me and I knew; then thou didst show me their evil deeds" (Jer. 11:8). Ezekiel was shown "what the house of Israel is doing in the dark" (Ez. 8:12). To pass through human life with this level of sensitivity must've been so hard. Psychologically and nervously, the stress would've been awful. It seems to me that the prophets had to be somehow psychologically strengthened by God to endure living that sensitively in this crass and unfeeling world- hence God made Ezekiel and Jeremiah as a wall and "iron pillar" to Israel, hardened their faces, so that they wouldn't be "dismayed at [the] looks" of those who watched them with anger and consternation (Jer. 1:18; 15:20; Ez. 2:4-6; 3:8,9,27). This psychological strengthening was not aimed at making them insensitive, but rather in strengthening them to live sensitively to sin in a sinful world without cracking up. And He will do the same for us, too.

This psychological strengthening was absolutely necessary- for no human being can live in a constant state of inspiration without breaking. The composer Tchaikovsky commented: "If that condition of mind and soul, which we call inspiration, lasted long without intermission,

no artist could survive it. The strings would break and the instruments be shattered into fragments". The whole tremendous experience of having God's mind in them, sharing His perspective, seeing the world through His eyes, made the prophets appear crazy to others. There's a marked emphasis upon the fact that they were perceived as madmen (e.g. Jer. 29:24,26; Hos. 9:7; 2 Kings 9:11). For us to walk down a street for even ten minutes, feeling and perceiving and knowing the sin of every person in those rooms and houses and yards, feeling the weeping of God over each of them... would send us crazy. And yet God strengthened the prophets, and there's no reason to think that He will not as it were strengthen us in our sensitivity too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Mt. 12

No matter what disappointments and disagreements we may have, we are baptized into not only the Lord Jesus personally, but also into a never ending relationship with each other. We cannot walk away from it. It doesn't only exist in the flurry of congratulations we received when we were baptized. Being a Christian cannot be just another town along life's road. I wonder whether we realise this as we ought. The Lord implied that those who did God's will were closer to Him than His physical mother or sister or brother (Mt. 12:48-50). It has been observed that "in a kinship-oriented society like Israel, it must have been startling for people to hear of a bond that was even deeper than that of the natural family". And so it is in many parts of the world today. Responsibility to our natural families can easily take precedence over those to our spiritual family. This should not be so.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

July 12

1 Sam. 25

It will be apparent to any regular Bible reader that there is a tremendous repetition within the Biblical narratives. Individuals tend to go through very similar experiences, and often the same words are used in the descriptions of the experience or their response to it. Some of these similarities are so specific and humanly unlikely to be replicated that one can only conclude that there was a higher power over-ruling their situations. It may be that the Angels work in human lives according to some kind of Divine pattern, and this accounts for the sense of repetition and *deja vu*. But it may also be because it is God's intention that we meditate upon the lives of previous servants to the point where we see their experiences coming through, in principle, in our own lives; and we are urged on to a like victory as they attained. Consider the similarities between the David / Nabal / Abigail experience and those of Jacob, whilst he too kept flocks (1 Sam. 25:35 = Gen. 32:20; 25:18 = Gen. 32:13; 25:27 = Gen. 33:11). And the way Abigail asked David to remember her for good when he came in his kingdom, knowing that he was perfect and suffering unjustly....is exactly the spirit of the thief on the cross. And David like Jesus responds that he has "accepted thy person" (1 Sam. 25).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-2-1Repetition_In_Biblical_Narratives.htm

Jer 2

Who God is, the nature of His Name of Yahweh, of itself inspires our worship. This is important; for we become what we worship (Jer. 2:5). Those who worship idols become like them; and those who worship the true God for all that He is, was and will be, become like Him. This is why worship and the appreciation of Him that underpins it is crucial for every true believer.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Mt. 13

The Lord spoke of conversion as really seeing, really hearing, really understanding, and commented that the disciples had reached this point (Mt. 13:15,16). But he also told them that they needed to be converted and become as children, knowing they knew nothing as they ought to know (Mt. 18:3). After seeing what happened to the sons of Sceva, it would appear that some who had 'believed' went up to a higher level of commitment: "Many also of them that had believed came, confessing and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together, and burned them" (Acts 19:18,19 RV). This would seem to imply that despite having 'believed', perhaps with the same level of shallow conviction as some 'believed' in the teaching of Jesus during His ministry, their faith wasn't so deep. They were taken up to an altogether higher level of commitment, resulting in 'confessing and declaring', and quitting their involvement with magic. There are levels up the ladder; may it be that today we go up one further.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-1-3Peters_Conversion.htm

July 13

1 Sam. 26, 27

The Ziphites a second time betrayed David to Saul. This time, David goes out with Abishai to where Saul was sleeping, but doesn't kill him. He takes Saul's spear, and then calls out to Saul, making the claim that God will "deliver me out of all tribulation" (1 Sam. 26:24). The Hebrew word he uses for "deliver" is just that he used in Ps. 54:7, which he spoke at the time of the first crisis with the Ziphites: God "hath delivered me out of all trouble". He means: 'I believe that God *will* deliver me'. But David was so certain of receiving that deliverance from the court of Heaven, that he used the past tense. Yet God made the situation repeat, as He does in our lives; so that we put into practice the faith we learnt in our earlier experience of the same situation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/7-2david_and_the_ziphites.htm

Jer 3

The prophets saw the love of God, but saw too how Israel spurned it and refused to understand it. It must've been a tragic and awful experience. The very essence of God's Name was that He has a perpetual and passionate love for His people; but they didn't believe

it, nor were they even very interested. The prophets spoke of the amazing grace and eternal love of God for Israel, how His wrath endured but for a moment (Is. 57:16; Jer. 18:23); and yet Israel asked: "Will he be angry for ever?" (Jer. 3:5). It was more than frustrating for the prophets; they shared God's feelings of having poured out so great a love, to see it ignored and disregarded, no time to look at it, too busy sowing my seeds, weeding my garden, having coffee... Jeremiah mourned Israel's lack of spiritual sensitivity and failure to live up to their potential- they had eyes, but didn't see (Jer. 5:23), they were God's servant, but a blind one; His messenger, but unable to hear any message (Is. 42:19). And we will feel the same as we live in this world today.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Mt. 14

Peter cried out "*Lord*, save me!" when most men in that situation would have simply cried out "Save me!". But his grasp of the *Lordship* of the One he followed inspired faith. If He was truly Lord, He was capable of all things. "Lord, save me!" was a call uttered in a moment of weakness. His "sinking" (Mt. 14:30) is described with the same word used about condemnation at the last day (Mt. 18:6), and yet Peter in his preaching persuades condemned men to do just the same: to *call* on the *Lord* in order to be *saved* (Acts 2:21,40,47; 4:12; 11:14). He invited all men to enter into the weakness and desperation which he had known on the water of Galilee, and receive a like unmerited salvation. And this should be the basis of our urgent witness to people.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-3-4Appreciation_of_Christ's_Exaltation.htm

July 14

1 Sam. 28

Just before his final fight with the Philistines, "Saul enquired of the Lord (but) the Lord answered him not" (1 Sam. 28:6), and therefore he went to a witch. But in God's final analysis of Saul, Yahweh says that He smote Saul because Saul sinned against God's word by *not* enquiring of God, but of a witch (1 Chron. 10:13,14). But Saul *did* enquire of God (see 1 Sam. 14:27 s.w.; 28:6), but God didn't answer him (note how often in the records it is stated that David enquired successfully of Yahweh). The point is that although Saul prayed to God and enquired of His word on the surface, in his heart, he did nothing of the sort; and therefore his prayer and enquiry was reckoned never to have happened. And we must ask how much of our prayer and Bible study is seen by God as being only spoken and read on a surface level. This was exactly the problem of natural Israel. "They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled (in prayer) upon their beds" (Hos. 7:14). "Though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him" (Hos. 11:7).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-5real_prayer.htm

Jer 4

If we too have a heart that bleeds, we will come to know the mind of Jeremiah, who as he proclaimed the judgments of his last days, interrupted his sermon: "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at the walls of my heart; my heart is disquieted in me...because my soul heareth

the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war” (Jer. 4:19 RV). His very *soul* heard the message which he preached, and he interrupts his proclamation of it with this emotional outburst; this was no mindless distribution of bills or casual mention of our church. He was pained in his heart to the extent that he seems to have had some form of seizure. This is how much Jeremiah felt for those he preached to and warned, both within and without of the ecclesia. And he speaks of the pain of *his* heart after having spoken of the pain that would reach unto the heart of Judah (Jer. 4:18,19). The pain of their heart became the pain of his heart. And yet Jeremiah had the mind of God in this sense, as David was after God’s own heart.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

Mt. 15

Jesus not only spoke to women publically, but is even recorded as allowing a Gentile woman to change His mind (Mt. 15:22). This was unthinkable and shocking to contemporary society. It reflects His value of all persons, women included; and reflects His humility and sensitivity as a pattern for ourselves.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/10-4.htm>

July 15

1 Sam. 29, 30

David's *respect* for Saul is amazing. It's shown again in the way that David fairly evidently wanted to fight against Saul with the men of Achish, evidently wanting to turn against them and fight for Saul- as they correctly guessed (1 Sam. 29:8). This would have been suicidal. For Saul wanted to kill him, and the Philistines also would have tried to kill David as a result of this. He would have had no place to run. But even to the point of political suicide and the serious risking of his own life, David so loved his enemy. This true love leads to and is related to true respect. This kind of respect is sadly lacking in our society, and has rubbed off upon our relationships within families and ecclesias. Often David calls Saul his master, describing himself as Saul's servant (1 Sam. 17:32,34,36; 20:8; 24:6; 26:16,19; 29:3,4; 30:15). This was no formal " Sincerely your brother and fellow-servant" . This was a real conscious putting of himself down, as the Lord Jesus felt he was a worm rather than a man (Ps. 22:6). If only we would concentrate upon our own status and show some true respect for others on account of their being in the ecclesia, having even been anointed spiritually at their baptism (2 Cor. 1:21) as Saul was.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-3-2David_And_Saul.htm

Jer 5

The tension within God is apparent. Jeremiah speaks of it: “How can I pardon you... shall I avenge myself on a nation such as this? Shall I not punish them for these things?” (Jer. 5:7-9,28,29). God reveals Himself as oscillating between punishing and redeeming, judging sin and overlooking it. God is open to changing His stated plans (e.g. to destroy Nineveh within forty days, to destroy Israel and make of Moses a new nation). He isn't like the Allah of Islam, who conducts a monologue with his followers; the one true God of Israel earnestly seeks dialogue with His people, and as such He enters into all the contradictory feelings and

internal debates which dialogue involves. ‘God loves the sinner and hates the sin’ has always seemed to me problematic, logically and practically. Love is in the end a personal thing; in the end love and hate are appropriate to persons, not abstractions. And the person can’t so easily be separated from their actions. Ultimately, it is persons who will be saved or condemned. The prophets reveal both the wrath and love of God towards His people, in the same way as a parent or partner can feel both wrath and love towards their beloved. These oscillations of feelings, the sharp opposition between judgment and mercy, were felt equally by the prophets, who were breathing in God’s spirit. And we will feel something of them in our feelings today.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Mt. 16

In Mt. 16:17 Peter is commended for having had the Father reveal Jesus to Him. Yet Mt. 11:27 says that the Father reveals the identity of His Son to all who truly come to Him. Thus Peter is representative of all who have truly perceived the Son’s identity in Jesus of Nazareth. The whole story of Peter thus becomes a picture of each of us, and not mere history.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-1-2Peter_Our_Example.htm

July 16

1 Sam. 31

There were times when Jonathan's relationship with Saul and the court became more strained than at others. Their all consuming desire was increasingly the destruction of David. Our surrounding world has a similar, obsessive, anti-Christ enthusiasm to which we are diametrically opposed. It would seem that Saul's whole family turned against David. A comparison of 1 Chron.10:6 and 1 Sam.31:6 shows a parallel between the house of Saul and his men; and it was the men of Saul who aided Saul in persecuting David (23:25,26).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-2-3Jonathans_Relationship_With_Saul.htm

Jer 6

Like many of the surrounding peoples, the Jews were sure that because they had a temple, because they offered sacrifice to their God and went through required rituals, therefore they were OK. The prophets exposed all this as scandalous pretension, revealing Israel’s cherished beliefs and suppositions about these things as meaningless and false. Their surrounding world taught that if you offered sacrifice to your god, all went smoothly. And yet Jeremiah blasts them: “To what purpose does frankincense come [up] to me... your burnt offerings are not acceptable” (Jer. 6:20). Time and again Jeremiah accuses the people of purposefully inciting God to anger through their worshipping of Him (Jer. 7:18,19; 11:17,18; 25:6; 44:3-8)- whereas the onlooker would’ve likely commented that at least they were doing *something* , and Jeremiah should just calm himself down about it all.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-6.htm>

Mt. 17

The disciples didn't have enough faith to cure the sick boy. Jesus told them this: it was "because of your little faith...if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove..." (Mt. 17:20 RV). Think carefully what is going on here. They had not even faith as a tiny grain of mustard seed; they didn't have the faith to cure the boy. But Jesus says they did have "little faith". He recognized what insignificant faith they did have. He was so sensitive to the amount of faith in someone, even if it was insignificant in the final analysis. We likewise need to be able to positively and eagerly discern faith in those we preach to and seek to spiritually develop.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/7-2teaching_style_of_jesus.htm

July 17

2 Sam. 1

David and Saul had a highly complex relationship, pointing forward to the complexity of relationship between Christ and Israel. Consider the way that Jewry initially accepted John's Gospel of Messiah, how soon after the resurrection thousands of the priests who had rejected Christ then accepted him, and how even a few hours before the crucifixion the people shouted out for Jesus of Nazareth to be their Messiah-king. These are some of many hints that there was a complex acceptance-rejection relationship between Israel and Christ. Saul and David likewise had a mutual love and respect for each other. After all Saul had done to David, David's grief at his death in 2 Sam. 1 is deep indeed. David taught all Israel to regularly sing that song of grief for Saul (2 Sam. 1:18), and his zeal to demonstrate his forgiveness to the house of Saul is outstanding. Saul's sons and family were also involved in the anti-David campaign. How to love the unlovely, to live without bitterness, to not be a psychological victim of our past experiences, is absolutely vital for the true child of God. In David and above all the Lord Jesus we see this achieved so supremely.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-3-2David_And_Saul.htm

Jer 7

There's a grating sarcasm in Jer. 7:21-23: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh... I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings...but this command I gave them: Obey my voice". The people loved their temple: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord...'", they said. And Jeremiah responds: "You trust in deceptive words to no avail" (Jer. 7:4,8). And time and again, the prophets predicted the destruction of the temple by the God of Israel. This was radical stuff in those days; the idea was that the survival of a god depended upon the survival of his temple or shrine. No pagan god would threaten to destroy his own shrine. Israel's God was so different. Likewise a pagan god looked after his own people against their enemies. But Yahweh of Israel sent and empowered Israel's enemies against them, and gave them victory against His own people; He encamped against His very own people (Is. 29:2-4). The counter-cultural spirit of the prophets is the very spirit in which we live today, in our world.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-6.htm>

Mt. 18

The king (Jesus) makes a reckoning with His servants right now, and it is for us to be influenced by the gracious accounting He shows towards us, and then in this life reflect an appropriate grace to our brother (Mt. 18:23 RV). The reckoning is going on right now, indeed in a sense it occurred on the cross.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_1.htm

July 18

2 Sam. 2

Sometimes the Bible is very vague. Under inspiration, the Hebrew writer seems to have forgotten the exact quotation, or to have been deliberately vague, when he speaks of "one in a certain place testified" (Heb. 2:6; RV "somewhere"). There are times when the Spirit uses very approximate numbers rather than exact ("about the space of four hundred and fifty years" , Acts 13:20 cp. 1 Kings 6:1). The reference to "seventy" in Judges 9:56 also doesn't seem exact. Seven and a half years (2 Sam. 2:11) becomes "seven years" (1 Kings 2:11); three months and ten days (2 Chron. 36:9) becomes "three months" (2 Kings 24:8). And 1 Kings 7:23 gives the circumference of the laver as "thirty cubits", although it was ten cubits broad. Taking 'pi' to be 3.14, it is apparent that the circumference would have been 31.4 cubits; but the Spirit says, summing up, "thirty". Surely this is to show that God is God, not man. His word is not contradictory, but in ensuring this, God does not sink down to the level of a man who wanted to forge a faultless book, carefully ensuring that every figure exactly tallied. He has a spiritual culture much higher than this. And this is behind the many Bible paradoxes which we meet.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3Bible_Paradoxes.htm

Jer 8

Jer. 8:5 speaks of the upwards and downwards spiral we experience daily: "Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return". The Hebrew words for "slidden back" and "return" are identical. The image is of a man on a muddy slope; he slides back either into sin, or into the way of the Lord. We must 'slide' one way or the other; every micro decision which makes up the stream of daily life is confirmed by God one way or the other.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

Mt. 19

Jesus told the man that if he would enter into life, he must keep the commandments (Mt. 19:17). Insofar as he kept those commands, he would right now enter into life. We are entering into the experience of the real life, the "eternal life", right now! Likewise the camel must shed its load of riches and goods, so that it can pass through the gate into the Kingdom. But we are doing that right now! We will pass through the gate into the Kingdom when the Lord returns (Rev. 22:14), and yet through shedding our materialism, we do it in prospect now. John puts it more bluntly and yet more absolutely: now, through the life of faith, we have the eternal life, in that we begin to live now the type of life which we will eternally live. We receive the Kingdom of God here and now, in that we receive the Gospel of the Kingdom; and if we accept it as a little child, we begin to enter it, now- in that the lives we live determine whether or not we will enter it at the Lord's coming. We are on our way into life! We have received the Kingdom, our names were written from the foundation of the

world, and only our falling from grace can take that away. This is almost too good news to believe.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/12.htm>

July 19

2 Sam. 3

Saul was David's enemy, he drove David to absolute despair, his senseless persecution of David was articulated in every way he knew how. In all this we see played out the prototype of the hatred between the Jews and the Lord. Yet when Saul was slain for his sins, David's love for him was overflowing, to the point that his people saw that this was no political theatricism (2 Sam. 3:36,37). His lament over Saul was taught to the children of Judah (2 Sam. 1:18); and the chapters of 2 Samuel are full of examples of David's expression of love for Saul in every way he knew how.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/13Images_of_Love_of_Christ.htm

Jer 9

Jeremiah had the mind of God, as David was after God's own heart. This is reflected by the way in which it is very difficult at times in Jeremiah to decide who is speaking- Jeremiah, or God. Jer. 9:1-3,10,11 is a good passage to work through from this perspective, asking 'Who is speaking? Jeremiah, or God?'. Their minds were clearly so intertwined. Both of them are described, in consecutive verses, as rising up early to plead with Israel (Jer. 25:3,4). And is such intertwining of minds, the Divine and human, possible for us this day?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

Mt. 20

The weak labourer (no employer wanted to hire him) who works one hour but is given a day's pay for it. We are left to imagine him walking away in disbelief clutching his penny (cp. the faithful with salvation at the judgment) (Mt. 20:1-16). The strong labourer who works all day and complains at the end that the weak labourer has been given a penny. "Go thy way..." (Mt. 20:14) could imply he is fired from the Master's service because of this attitude. This would fit in with the way the other parables describe the second man as the rejected one.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-2bent_knees_wet_eyes.htm

July 20

2 Sam. 4, 5

Compare Gen. 48:16 with 2 Sam. 4:9. What Jacob only learnt at the *end* of his life, David learnt and applied during his life. And we should likewise not be experiential learners, learning only from our own mistakes, but learn instead from Jacob and the instruction of God's word..

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-1Jacob_Our_Example.htm

Jer 10

Every reference to " the God of Jacob / Israel" is effectively saying: 'I'm the God that stuck with mixed up, struggling Jacob. And I'll stick with you too, through spiritual thick and thin, and bring you through in the end'. This is the love of God for Jacob. So close is the association between God and Jacob that there are times when the name 'Jacob' becomes a synonym for 'the God of Jacob'. There are examples in Jer. 10:16; 51:19. The name of Israel therefore was paralleled with the name of God- Joshua feared that the name of Israel would be cut off, "and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Josh. 2:9). Thus God identified Himself with Jacob- such was the love of God for Jacob. And He is our God too, through all our slowness of spiritual growth.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-3-4Love_Of_God_For_Jacob.htm

Mt. 21

We have a choice: to fall on the stone of Christ and be broken, or live proudly in this life without breaking our fleshly ways at all, until at the Lord's coming we are ground to powder (Mt. 21:44). This is an obvious allusion to the image of the Kingdoms of men being ground to powder by the Lord's return. The Lord was saying that if we won't be broken now, then we will share the judgments of the world, and be broken by Him then in condemnation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

July 21

2 Sam. 6

Our minds should be full of God's word, ever meditating in some way upon it. Mary was a great example of this. The Angel's description of Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary (Lk. 1:35) could have sent her mind back to how the Spirit-Cherubim and the cloud of Spirit glory overshadowed the ark (Ex. 25:20; 1 Chron. 28:18). The LXX uses the word for "overshadow" about the cloud of glory overshadowing the ark in the wilderness (Ex. 40:35; Num. 9:18,22). If Mary's mind had been alerted to this possibility, she would have seen the relevance of Elizabeth's words: "Who am I, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk. 1:43). For they are remarkably similar to the LXX of 2 Sam. 6:9, where David asks "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?". As a result of this question of David's, the ark remained three months in the house of Obed-Edom (2 Sam. 6:11). And was this why Mary, seeing herself as the ark, remained for three months in the house of Elisabeth straight after hearing this same question asked (Lk. 1:56)? There are further links, between the gladness of Lk. 1:44 and the joy of 2 Sam. 6:12; and the loud cry of Lk. 1:42 and that of 2 Sam. 6:15. If one combines Lk. 1:31 and Jn. 1:14 we have the word of God becoming flesh and "tabernacling" among us in the womb and faith of Mary. If these connections are valid, then Mary would have felt that within her was He who would be the covenant of the Lord, the stones of the word of God made flesh in a little boy. This was perception indeed.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-2-5Faith_Of_Mary.htm

Jer 11

he height of the demand, the extent of the implication of being in covenant with God ought to preclude the possibility of worshipping anything else. The covenant we have entered has constant and binding claims upon our loyalty. This is the implication of the promises to Abraham which form the basis of that covenant. It is worth observing that at times of Israel's apostasy, God reconfirmed Israel's covenant relationship with Him (Jer. 11:2). By reminding them of the nature of their covenant relationship, they were being led to realize that the life of sin was not for them. And so there should be a like awareness in us when at least weekly we are reminded of our covenant bond.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Mt. 22

The parable of the marriage feast highlights the tragedy of Jewish rejection of what could have been theirs. There will be an ever-increasingly vigorous preaching campaign by the "servants", seeing that "they which were bidden were not worthy" (Matt. 22:8) - the Greek implying not enough numerically. As a result of this preaching, "the wedding was furnished ('filled' - numerically) with guests" (Matt. 22:10). This indicates that in some ways, God does work to a number. Once the required number of converts is made, then the supper can begin. Their appeal being to "the poor...maimed...halt and...blind" suggests that the marginal and desperate within society will be those who respond- and this is happening right now in the triumphant progress of preaching in our day. The servants are sent "into the highways" (Matt. 22:9), the Greek meaning 'a market square'. This must be designed to recall the parable of the labourers standing idle in the market place at the 11th. hour (Matt. 20:6,7). The very short probation of those 11th.-hour workers will match that of the latter-day converts. And again, it was the old and weak who nobody wanted to hire.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/18.htm>

July 22

2 Sam. 7

It was God's clearly expressed wish that He should *not* live in a physical house (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Acts 7:48; 17:24). Yet He accommodated Himself to human weakness in wanting a physical house in which to worship Him; He came and lived (in a sense) in just such a house. God makes concessions to our weaknesses, each day- and we should to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Jer 12

In Jer. 12:15-17, where God describes His conditional dealings with the surrounding Gentile nations in language reminiscent of that He uses about His own people: "After that I have plucked them out I will return, and will bring them again [to Judah] every man to his heritage...and it [i.e., this] shall come to pass, *if* they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name...*then* shall they be built in the midst of my people. But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation". The *if...then* construction is

clearly conditional: the Gentiles could have come and dwelt in the land in a Kingdom-like situation, if Judah had taught them, and if they had responded. And the peoples around us today likewise can come to the Kingdom, if we teach them...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-3Jeremiah_Restoration_Prophecies.htm

Mt. 23

Because we are all "brethren in Christ", actually something more than physical brothers and sisters, we are not to call any of us 'Master', because if we do, it will distract us from our personal looking to Jesus as Lord and Master (Mt. 23:8). This is why anything that even suggests a personality cult built around leading brethren, no matter how wonderful they are or were, really must be avoided. For it takes us away from the one and only Lord and Master.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

July 23

2 Sam. 8, 9

Solomon wished to imitate his father David in every sense; his own real personality only really came out in the Ecclesiastes years, when he took to drink, materialism, women and idolatry. It took the influence of his parents many years to wear off. David had weaknesses for horses (2 Sam. 8:4) and many wives; and Solomon followed in these steps too. In 2 Chron. 8:3 "Solomon went to Hamath Zobah"; just as in 2 Sam.8:3 "David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob king of Zobah". In 2 Chron. 8:8 Those "whom the children of Israel consumed not, did Solomon make to pay tribute". In 2 Sam.8:6 "David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts". In 2 Sam.8:7 "David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem"- just as Solomon did (2 Chron. 9:15,16). Are we just living out the expectations of others, as Solomon did?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-4-2Solomon_And_David.htm

Jer 13

Dan. 2:44 describes how the kingdoms of this world will be broken and scattered as the chaff before the wind. Yet this is exactly the language of Jer. 13:24 concerning Israel's latter destruction. They will be "dashed" (Jer. 13:14) as the nations of the world will be (Ps. 2:9). The same verse says they will be destroyed by brother being dashed against brother- again, the picture of the world's final destruction (Zech. 14:13). Rev. 2:27 speaks of the unfaithful in the ecclesia likewise being dashed to pieces. The Lord's coming will be a stone that grinds them to powder (Mt. 21:44). If we won't be broken now, then we will share the judgments of the world, and be broken by Him then in condemnation. This is our choice now- be broken, or, be broken. Is it therefore surprising if life makes us feel broken men and women at times?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

Mt. 24

2 Pet.3:12,15 reminds us that by our prayers and spiritual development, the days before the second coming will be shortened. If they were not, even the elect would lose their faith (Mt. 24:22)- showing how those of us who are alive at Christ's coming will barely survive the spiritual traumas of the last days. The virgins were sleeping when they should have been watching; and Peter says that the righteous in the last generation (see context) will scarcely be saved (1 Pet. 4:18). It's going to be really tough to keep our faith in the very last days.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/11-3.htm>

July 24

2 Sam. 10

David sent messengers to Nabal meaning well to him, and they were rudely rebuffed, resulting in his anger which only Abigail's grace and wisdom saved him from (1 Sam. 25). And yet the same situation repeated in its essence when he sent messengers to Hanun who were likewise misinterpreted and rebuffed (2 Sam. 10:3). Again, David got angry- but there was no Abigail to restrain him, and he did get into an impossible fight... from which by grace God delivered him. Could it not be that David failed to learn from his previous experience...? Will *we* learn from our experiences?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-2-1Repetition_In_Biblical_Narratives.htm

Jer 14

Like us, Jeremiah didn't always have a heart of compassion. Initially he didn't even want to preach to his people. And he even prayed that he would so grieve for them in regard to the message he gave them, that he would cry for them day and night: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. 9:1). And this prayer was heard. For by Lamentations, this is just what he was doing. And if what we read of Jeremiah troubles us, we too can pray for a heart that bleeds, and through the experience of life which the Lord allows us, He will develop such a heart in those who want it. You may be so caught up in your business, your family, your ecclesia even, your web of social contact...that in honest moments, you know that your heart doesn't bleed as it should. You see the needs and pain and struggle of men and women, but it doesn't touch your heart very deeply. Jeremiah may well have been like this; but he prayed for a new heart, and so can you. Jeremiah had actually been commanded by God to have such a level of grief for His people: "Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken" (Jer. 14:17). Jeremiah's grief was God's word of care and concern to the people; and so it can be with us. Jeremiah was to be like this, to reflect God's passion for His people; so he prayed that he would have such a heart of true compassion [note that the chapters in Jeremiah are totally out of sequence chronologically]; and in the end, he found it. The fact others reject our message ought to pain us at the very core and heart of our beings. Jer. 13:17 records a private soliloquy of Jeremiah: "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride". He would hide away and weep for them, and nobody would ever know. His grief was to be deeply personal ("my soul shall weep") and unperceived by others ("in secret places"). And I challenge us, each one: have we ever done this, or even come near it, in our frustration with those who reject our message? Jeremiah wept. He didn't "...not care a rush".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

Mt. 25

"The bridegroom tarried" (Mt. 25:5) uses the same Greek word as in Mt. 24:48, "My Lord delayeth his coming". The bridegroom/Lord will delay - what was wrong with that statement was the attitude with which it was made. The implication is "The Lord's definitely delaying, so I have ample opportunity to indulge in worldliness and take out all my grievances against my brethren'. It would seem that the holocaust period (3.5 years?) follows the intimation that the Lord's coming is imminent. The spiritual high that all the believers will have at the time of this intimation is indicated by all the virgins initially having enough oil. However, the ensuing holocaust period will be a time of strife within the ecclesia, the stewards beating the fellowservants, the oil (i.e. true spirituality developed by the word) running low. Present trends amongst us indicate that if the community were highly pressurised, such a scenario could quickly occur. Thus the position in spiritual Israel will match that among Jewry.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment8.htm>

July 25

2 Sam. 11

Was the sin a one-off slip up or part of a longer term relationship? David watched her from the roof top; what are the Biblical associations of the roof top? (cp. 2 Sam. 16:22). Is it significant that they got married afterwards? Is this how most oriental kings would have got round the problem? Consider: How well did David & Bathsheba know each other? How near did they live to each other? (So how are we to understand 2 Sam. 12:3?) Was Bathsheba spiritual? Or just a dumb blond? Was David spiritual at this time (cp. Ps. 30:6)? Would he have fallen so deeply just at the sight of a beautiful woman? David lay with her "for (because) she was purified..." after washing, in obedience to the law (2 Sam. 12:4) ; what does this imply? The sin occurred at " eveningtide" ; what connection between washing, purification and the evening? What part of the Law does 2 Sam. 12:9 refer to (cp. Ps. 51:16)? What other connections are there between sexuality and spirituality? Gen. 39:6,7 Hebrew text is one. Was Bathsheba guilty or innocent? Are we helped to an answer by Ps. 51:4; 1 Kings 15:5; and 2 Sam. 11:4 is an odd way of putting it (it's usually the other way round). Why wouldn't Uriah sleep with Bathsheba? What can we imply from the emphasis on messengers in 2 Sam. 11:3,4,5,6,19,23,27? Could Bathsheba read or write?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-7-1-2Examples_Of_Bible_Study.htm

Jer 15

Despite this unity of spirit between God and the prophets, the prophets weren't always forced to say the words. Jeremiah didn't want to say them at times, the weariness of it all got on top of him; and yet he felt unable to walk away, just as God felt with Israel. But there were times when he outright rebelled. Jer. 20:7 is made a mess of in most translations, because the obvious translation is simply too shocking. Jeremiah complains: "O Lord, thou hast seduced me [s.w. Ex. 22:16 of a man seducing a woman], and I am seduced; thou hast raped me [s.w.

Dt. 22:15] and I am overcome” (Abraham Heschel’s translation). Here is Jeremiah saying that he was attracted by God, he was seduced by Him, but then the whole thing became too much- he felt his soul had been raped. And yet in Jer. 15:16 he says that he had found God’s word and eaten it, and as a result, “I am called by thy name, O Lord”- the language of a woman marrying and taking her husband’s name (Is. 4:1). The word of God was his “joy [and] delight”- two words used four times elsewhere in Jeremiah, and always in the context of the joy of a wedding (Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11). Jeremiah saw his prophetic task as actually a marriage to God, an inbreathing of His word and being, to the point that he could say that he personally was “full of the wrath / passion of God” (Jer. 6:11). A prophet could only be incensed if God was incensed (Num. 23:8)- such was the bond between them. No wonder these men felt alone amongst men. They had a relationship with God which others couldn’t enter into, which totally affected their lives and beings. The preacher / testifier of Jesus knows something of this spirit of prophecy. But in Jer. 20:7, Jeremiah felt he had been raped and not married. He resented the complete takeover of his heart. In Jer. 15:15, Jeremiah asks for vengeance on his persecutors, and in Jer. 15:18 accuses God of deceiving him. God’s response is to ask him to repent of this, so that he can resume his prophetic work: “If you [Jeremiah] return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me [prophetic language]. If you utter what is precious, and not what is base, you shall be as my mouth” (Jer. 15:19). Perhaps Jeremiah had this incident in mind when he commented: “The Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word” (Lam. 1:18). This indicates that at least in Jeremiah’s case, he was not irresistibly carried along by the Spirit in some kind of ecstasy, having no option but to speak God’s word. His speaking of God’s word required that he shared the essentially loving and gracious spirit / disposition of his God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-1.htm>

Mt. 26

Peter's letters are full of reference to the cross and various physical aspects of the trial and mocking of the Lord which he witnessed first hand:

- Girding ourselves with humility 1 Pet. 1:13), as the Lord did at the last supper (s.w. Jn. 13:5), although then, Peter had so misunderstood what He had done.

- Christ as the sacrificed lamb (1 Pet. 1:19)

- “Buffeted” (2:20) s.w. Mt. 26:67 re. Christ being struck with a fist- something Peter would have probably watched out of the corner of his eye from where he was.

Our reflection upon the Lord's sufferings should be consciously and unconsciously reflected in our words and reasoning.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-2-1Peter And The Cross.htm>

July 26

2 Sam. 12

Interpret the parable of 2 Sam. 12:1-4; the two men; the city; the many flocks; the one lamb; nourished up; lay in his bosom; unto him as a daughter; a traveller (cp. Lk. 11:6). What was

the relationship between Uriah and Bathsheba? Do you think Bathsheba was satisfied with her marriage to Uriah bearing this in mind?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-7-1-2Examples_Of_Bible_Study.htm

Jer 16

When we read that those who were to die in the land due to the Babylonian invasion would not be buried “neither shall men lament for them” (Jer. 16:6), this sounds like a prediction. But actually it’s a command- for Jeremiah was told “Neither go to lament nor bemoan them” (Jer. 16:5). But he did lament them- and God didn’t ignore that, but rather inspired the record of the book of Jeremiah’s Lamentations! Likewise God told Jeremiah not to pray for the people, but when Jeremiah insisted on doing so, God did in fact hear him. So we must be careful to discern what is prediction and what is command or intention. And even then we have to recognize that God’s purpose is to some extent open-ended- if men and women wish to walk with Him but don’t strictly follow His preferred intentions, He may still walk and work with them in the extension of His purpose.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-2Human_Response.htm

Mt. 27

A nice insight into the intensity with which Paul meditated on the words of Jesus is provided by his comment on Mt. 27:11-14, where we read that Jesus before Pilate said just one word in Greek; translated " Thou sayest" . It is stressed there that Jesus said nothing else, so that Pilate marvelled at His silent self-control. Yet Paul speaks with pride of how the Lord Jesus " before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession" (1 Tim. 6:13). You'd expect him to be alluding to some major speech of Jesus. But it seems, reading his spirit, Paul's saying: 'Lord Jesus, your self control, your strength of purpose, was great. I salute you, I hold you up to Timothy as the supreme example. Just one word. What a witness!'. Are we meditating on our Lord's words with such depth?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/semester1/14-7-1Paul_Use_Of_The_Gospels.htm

July 27

2 Sam. 13

There are Biblical examples of refusing to take guilt when others feel that it should be taken. Recall how the Lord’s own parents blamed Him for ‘making them anxious’ by ‘irresponsibly’ remaining behind in the temple. The Lord refused to take any guilt, didn’t apologize, and even gently rebuked them (Lk. 2:42-51). In similar vein, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “Even if I made you sorry with a letter, I do not regret it” (2 Cor. 7:8). He would not take guilt for their being upset with him. Likewise Absalom comforted his raped sister not to ‘take it to heart’, not to feel guilty about it, as it seems she was feeling that way, taking false guilt upon her (2 Sam. 13:20).

False guilt is played upon by the ever greater fear of the spirit of judgment which progressively fills our world. Novels, movies, soap operas... all increasingly deal with this theme- judging who is guilty, to what extent, in what way, what judgment is necessary or

warranted. Everyone feels under constant criticism, innocent words are increasingly misread, litigation opened against truly unintentional slips of wording or action. In one form or another, earth's population is living in fear of judgment. Recriminations and reproach fly around our own community. None of us are indifferent to it all, all are hurt by the critical email, SMS, word, look or unspoken opinion of others. It leads to the fear between parents and children, wives and husbands, pastors and flock, which is breaking down society and our own community. This fear of criticism / judgment kills spontaneity, it precludes formulating independent thought and truly original ideas and programmes of action; it is the fear of this, rather than of *God's* judgment, which lead people to leave their talent buried in the earth. And in the end, it leads to an empty conformism to what is perceived to be the 'safe' position, a bourgeois, spiritually middle class formalism. And so we all tend to live in fear of others' judgment, with all the taking of false guilt which this creates.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-5-3true_and_false_guilt.htm

Jer 17

The materialist "at his end [rejection at the judgment] shall be a fool" (Jer. 17:11). The utter *folly* of the rejected is a major theme (Prov. 14:8,18; Ps. 5:5; 49:13; Mt. 7:26; 25:8). At the final judgment, all will become plain and clear. And we need to live in that spirit today. Parables like that of the rich *fool*, the *foolish* virgins... they will all be crystal clear to them. *Then* the Kingdom of Heaven will be likened to wise and foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1), after the judgment experience. But we can learn the folly of materialism right here today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_7.htm

Mt. 28

If we are real witnesses, testifiers to the reality of the Lord's death and resurrection, we must therefore, by the very nature of our experience, be witnesses of these things to the world. The resurrection is the witness that God has given of His Son. Whoever believes that witness, will have within themselves the witness- they will be witnesses to God's witness (1 Jn. 5:10 Gk.). The Lord twice told the disciples: " Go ye...go ye" (Mk. 16:15 cp. Mt. 28:19 and contexts). He was encouraging them to do the natural corollary of what they had experienced. We are to actively go and tell people- not wait for them to come to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

July 28

2 Sam. 14

The slayer of innocent blood was to be slain without pity: " thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee" (Dt. 19:13). But David seems to have stepped up to a higher level when he told the woman of Tekoah that he would protect her son from revenge murder, after he had slain another man (2 Sam. 14:8-10). The woman pointed out that if her son was slain, the inheritance would be lost in her husband's name. Here was a case where two principles seemed to be at variance: the need to slay the guilty, and the need to preserve the inheritance. The higher level was to forgive the slayer of

innocent blood, even though the Law categorically stated that he should be slain. Let's not be legalistic in our forgiveness; but frankly forgive as we have been.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-2Living_On_Different_Levels.htm

Jer 18

God's oscillations of feelings, the sharp opposition between judgment and mercy, were felt equally by the prophets, who were breathing in God's spirit. Thus there were many oppositions and paradoxes in the prophetic experience. They saw the world through the eyes of both God and man- Jeremiah said that God's wrath was his wrath, "I am full of the wrath of God" (Jer. 6:11), and yet he stood before God "to turn away thy wrath from them" (Jer. 18:20). They experienced sometimes wishing to abandon their very own people (Jer. 19:1), just as God felt at times; oscillating between anger and grace. The very prophetic call was "to pluck up and break down... to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). They knew the feeling of being betrayed and hated by their own people, and yet feeling such pain for the judgment to come upon them- despite being so badly treated by Judah and his own family, Jeremiah was still struck with pain at the thought of their judgment: "My anguish! My anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly..." (Jer. 4:19-21). These contradictions, paradoxes, oppositions, call them what you will, were felt deeply within the prophet's personality. The bi-polarity resulted in some of them exhibiting bi-polar emotions- e.g. Jeremiah one moment is cursing the day of his birth, the next, he is ecstatically joyful. The phenomena of depressed, bi-polar believers was once something I felt awkward about, even ashamed of. But now, it makes sense to me. Research into the bi-polar condition is still limited. But what has been established is that it is the presence in the person of seriously conflicting loyalties, emotions, persuasions, even belief systems, which has something to do with it. In some ways, it's more of a condition, a state of being, than a disorder. It doesn't surprise me that Jeremiah appears to have acted in a bi-polar manner. God can have multiple relationships with people simultaneously, feeling joy at one event and deep sorrow at another event, even though the events are happening at the same time. He also sees to the end of history. His nature allows such multiple feelings without any disorder. But for a mere man on earth, invited to share in the inner council of God, the experience of these things was and is deeply destabilizing. Yes, God made men like Jeremiah a brazen wall, hardened their faces... and yet all the same, the experience of all this would've led to a certain element of emotional bi-polarity. Perhaps this opens some kind of window into understanding the emotional and psychological experience of the believer, especially those involved in preaching.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Rom 1, 2

God's judgments are now made manifest (Rom. 1:19) in that we know His word, His judgments; in advance of how they will be made manifest in the future judgment (Rev. 15:4). We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat, but we are made manifest unto God (s.w.) even now (2 Cor. 5:10,11). In this sense we can know the judgment that is to come- it need not be an unknown mystery to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

July 29

2 Sam. 15

God appeared to Moses in the flame of fire in the bush, but Moses had to be told to take off his shoes as a sign of respect- even though taking off shoes was understood as a token of respect and recognition of sin (see 2 Sam. 15:30). If even Moses didn't perceive God's holiness as he should have done- how much more are we prone this day to fail in this matter?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/4-2-1Events_In_The_Life_Of_Moses.htm

Jer 19

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<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Rom 3, 4

" Some" Jews didn't believe (Rom. 3:3); the majority, actually, but the Father is more gentle than that. The whole tragic history of God's relationship with Israel is a sure proof of His

essentially positive character.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-3A_Good_Conscience.htm

July 30

2 Sam. 16

Shimei was a wicked man who hated God's servant David. God told him to curse David (2 Sam. 16:10). Afterwards, Shimei repents and acknowledges that by doing so he sinned (2 Sam. 19:20). And although David recognized that God had told Shimei to curse him (2 Sam. 16:10), David tells Solomon not to hold Shimei "guiltless" for how he had cursed him (1 Kings 2:9). Thus a man is encouraged by God to do the sinful act in which he has set his heart. There's a downward spiral which we can so easily slip into.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/11-22Homosexual_Downward_Spiral.htm

Jer 20

Despite the unity of spirit between God and the prophets, the prophets weren't always forced to say the words. Jeremiah didn't want to say them at times, the weariness of it all got on top of him; and yet he felt unable to walk away, just as God felt with Israel. But there were times when he outright rebelled. Jer. 20:7 is made a mess of in most translations, because the obvious translation is simply too shocking. Jeremiah complains: "O Lord, thou hast seduced me [s.w. Ex. 22:16 of a man seducing a woman], and I am seduced; thou hast raped me [s.w. Dt. 22:15] and I am overcome" (Abraham Heschel's translation). Here is Jeremiah saying that he was attracted by God, he was seduced by Him, but then the whole thing became too much- he felt his soul had been raped. And yet in Jer. 15:16 he says that he had found God's word and eaten it, and as a result, "I am called by thy name, O Lord"- the language of a woman marrying and taking her husband's name (Is. 4:1). The word of God was his "joy [and] delight"- two words used four times elsewhere in Jeremiah, and always in the context of the joy of a wedding (Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11). Jeremiah saw his prophetic task as actually a marriage to God, an inbreathing of His word and being, to the point that he could say that he personally was "full of the wrath / passion of God" (Jer. 6:11). If we know God, we will know something of Jeremiah's struggle with Him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-1.htm>

Rom 5, 6

It is worth following through Paul's argument in Romans. Chapters 1-5 convict all of sin, demonstrating that works can in no way save us. Chapter 6 then outlines how we can be saved; through association with Christ through baptism and a life "in Christ", which will result in God seeing us in the exalted way He does. Chapter 7 basically goes on to say 'But, of course, you'll still sin, even though chapter 6 has explained how God doesn't look at that side of you if you truly try to live "in Christ"'. Paul says many things about his life in Rom. 7 which seem to consciously connect with his description of life before baptism in Chapter 6 (e.g. 7:13 = 6:23; 7:14 = 6:17; 7:23 = 6:12,13; 7:24 = 6:6; 7:25 = 6:16,17). The reason for this is that after baptism, we have two people within us; the man of the flesh, who totally dominated our pre-baptismal life, is still within us; but (as Chapter 7 so graphically shows) he

is now in mortal conflict with the man of the Spirit, with whom we identify our real selves. Chapter 8 then goes on to encourage us that despite this conflict, sin is dead in Christ, and if we are in Him, then this is really how God sees us. Therefore Rom. 8 stresses that our state of mind is so crucial; if we are led of the Spirit-man, then we are assured of salvation at that point in time. Rom. 9-11 then appeals specifically to Israel to accept the glorious truth of all this, and then Chapters 12-16 show the practical response we should all make. Recognizing the existence of the new and old men within him, Paul can speak in Rom. 7 as if he is two different people; "I myself serve the law of God", but "my flesh" serves sin. Likewise David asked God not to hide his face from him, David personally, (Ps. 27:9; 69:17; 102:2; 143:7), but to hide His face from David's sins (Ps. 51:9). And one wonders whether the way the records of the Lord's temptations are written implies some similar recognition by the Spirit of the two 'men' within the Lord.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-2-2The_Spiritual_Man.html

July 31

2 Sam. 17

Let us no longer fear failure, for firstly we know there is forgiveness in Christ, and secondly, our focus is upon living the real life of ultimate discovery and adventure, able to live with the fears which this presents to us. Failure is no longer a problem to us; for the aim is ever before us. We will not be like Ahithophel, committing suicide because he ran out of highway and lost his political power to others (2 Sam. 17:23). Our failures are nothing more than temporary setbacks, as the baby who stretches out her hands to the lamp on the ceiling and cries because she can't reach it. We take them all, even our sins, in the spirit of the cross- the supreme failure which became the supreme triumph of God and the true person.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-2the_new_life.htm

Jer 21

In the surrounding culture of Israel, capital cities were portrayed as women, the wives of the gods. They are always presented as pure and wonderful. But the prophets represent cities like Jerusalem and Samaria as fallen women, whores. It was all *so* counter-cultural. Yahweh's prophet even appealed for Israel to surrender when under siege (Jer. 21:8-10). Try to enter into how radical and counter-cultural all this was. The prophets were trying to share the feelings and positions of a God *so* vastly different to the imaginations and understandings of His very own people. The nervous stress of this, the psychological pressure, can't be underestimated. And we are asked to share the spirit / mind / disposition of those prophets. Not only was God on the side of Israel's enemies; yet through all that, He somehow *was* with Israel; quite simply, "God is with us", even though it is He who encamps against them too (Is. 8:9,10; 18:4). The God of Auschwitz is somehow still the God of Israel. The very torment, even torture, of understanding that was etched clearly in the prophets, and it will be in us too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-6.htm>

Rom 7, 8

Romans 8 appears to confuse the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ in the believer, and Christ himself as " the Lord the Spirit" . Yet what Paul is showing is that in fact if we are spiritually minded, if our thinking is in harmony with the Father and Son, prayer is simply a merger of our Spirit with theirs; the idea of prayer as a means of requesting things doesn't figure, because God knows our need and will provide. The whole creation groans; we ourselves groan inwardly; and the Spirit makes intercession with groans that can't be uttered. Clearly enough, our groans are His groans. He expresses them more powerfully and articulately than we can.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm

August 1

2 Sam. 18

The Greek word *evangelion* translated 'Gospel' means, strictly, 'good news that is being passed on'; for example, the good news of a victory was passed on by runners to the capital city (cp. the Hebrew association of carrying tidings, and good news: 2 Sam. 18:20). Once it had been spread around and everyone knew it, it ceased to be *evangelion* ; it was no longer news that needed to be passed on. But in that time when there was a *joyful urgency* to pass it on, it was *evangelion*. Notice, heralding is not the same as lecturing. Our community for far too long equated preaching , good newsing, with lecturing. Lecturing seeks no result; whereas the herald of God has an urgency and breathlessness about his message. There must be a passion and enthusiasm in us for the message of Christ and His Kingdom. More to be feared than over emotionalism is the dry, detached utterance of facts as a droning lecture, which has neither heart nor soul in it. Man's peril, Christ's salvation...these things cannot mean so little to us that we feel no warmth or passion rise within us as we speak about them. Remember how the early preachers were so enthusiastic in their witness that they were thought to be drunk. We are insistently pressing our good news upon others- evangelizing. And the Spirit has chosen this precise word to describe that understanding and hope which has been committed to our trust. If we have the Truth, the Gospel, it is *of itself* something that by its very nature *must* be passed on. For this is in fact what the *evangelion* is- good news in the process of being passed on.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/20.htm>

Jer. 22

Just as the Father thought that His people "surely" would reverence His Son, so He was 'certain' that if His people went to Babylon in captivity, "surely then shalt thou be ashamed... for all thy wickedness" (Jer. 22:22). But the reality was that they grew to like the soft life of Babylon and refused to obey the command to return to God's land. Such was and is the hopefulness of God.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8.htm>

Rom. 9

The spiritual effect of God upon men over and above their own strength is indicated by the way God "left" a remnant of faithful believers in apostate Israel (Rom.9:29). Whilst their faithfulness was obviously a result of their own spiritual effort, God 'leaving' them from apostacy suggests that He was also active in preserving them from it too. The record does not speak of them saving themselves from it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/james_d09.html

August 2

2 Sam. 19

Shimei was a wicked man who hated God's servant David. God told him to curse David (2 Sam. 16:10). Afterwards, Shimei repents and acknowledges that by doing so he sinned (2 Sam. 19:20). And although David recognized that God had told Shimei to curse him (2 Sam. 16:10), David tells Solomon not to hold Shimei "guiltless" for how he had cursed him (1 Kings 2:9). Again, a man is encouraged by God to do the sinful act in which he has set his heart. There is a downward and an upwards spiral, into which we fall each day; with God waiting to confirm us in our choices.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-11The_Downward_Spiral.html

Jer. 23

Our places in the Kingdom will be by pure grace alone; but we must respond to this wonder by *trying* as earnestly as possible to only upbuild and not to stumble our brethren. A personally 'righteous' believer might be excluded from the Kingdom for the effect he has had on others. Both God and the pastors of Israel are described as having 'driven out' Israel from their land (Jer. 23:2,3,8); the pastors' sin resulted in all the people sinning and deserving judgment, and God worked with this system, confirming His people in the evil way they had taken. There is no doubt that we can be counted responsible for making another brother sin, even though he too bears responsibility for that sin.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

Rom. 10, 11

Our word of preaching can bring others to faith. Our preaching leads to faith being created in the hearers. "The word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8) is the word (Gospel) that leads to faith; and a man cannot believe without hearing the Gospel, and he will not hear it unless it is preached by a preacher. Paul summarises by saying that faith comes by hearing [the Gospel] and hearing by [the preaching of] the word of God (Rom. 10:8,14,17). Paul's point is that whoever believes will be saved (Rom. 9:33)- and therefore, we must preach to all, so that they might take advantage of this blessed opportunity.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-6bringing_people_to_faith.htm

August 3

2 Sam. 20, 21

Drivers can see an accident coming, but not swerve; there is a lack of cognition somewhere in the human psyche. Pilots take off at times knowing that their wings are frozen, and crash. Amasa saw the sword and must have seen the possibility of death, but didn't take cognisance of it (2 Sam. 20:10). Samson must have known, on one level, what Delilah would do. But mankind is in amnesia, somewhere, somehow, we fail to recognize the obvious. Likewise with the nearness of the Lord's return, with the urgency of our task in witness, with the evident need to follow God's word- this lack of cognisance so often comes into play. We really ought to pray, earnestly, for open hearts and eyes and obedient lives before our daily reading.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-3-2Spiritual_Paradigm_Shifts.htm

Jer. 24

Merely giving aid to the poor won't automatically make converts- true converts. It's simply not true that desperately poor people will somehow respond more eagerly than others to the Gospel. The Jews left in the land at the time of the exile were the very poorest (Jer. 39:10). But actually these were the spiritually weaker in the long run, and it was the more wealthy who went to Babylon who were the "good figs" of Jer. 24:3-8.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a7.htm>

Rom. 12

A link between David and us is in Ps. 140:9,10, which speaks of burning coals falling on the head of David's enemies; yet those words are effectively quoted in Rom. 12:20 concerning all believers. David sets himself up in the Psalms as our pattern. He speaks of himself and then applies the point to all of his readers. In other words, we really are to see David as representative of ourselves; we need to change our minds and lives so this really is the case.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-1David_Our_Example.htm

August 4

2 Sam. 22

The Father really does see us as this righteous. Men have risen up to this. David at the end of his life could say that he was upright and had kept himself from his iniquity (2 Sam. 22:21-24). He could only say this by a clear understanding of the concept of imputed righteousness. Paul's claim to have always lived in a pure conscience must be seen in the same way.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-3A_Good_Conscience.htm

Jer. 25

aking the cup of wine is a double symbol: of blessing (1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25), and of condemnation (Ps. 60:3; 75:8; Is. 51:17; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10; 16:19). Why this use of a double symbol? Surely the Lord designed this sacrament in order to highlight the two ways

which are placed before us by taking that cup: it is either to our blessing, or to our condemnation. Each breaking of bread is a further stage along one of those two roads. Paul realized this in pleading with the Corinthians to examine themselves before taking the emblems.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

Rom. 13, 14

We can appear to have spirituality, when in fact we have nothing, nothing at all. The man who built his house on the sand had the sensation of spiritual progress; he was building, he was getting somewhere, apparently. Likewise Israel were an empty [fruitless] vine, but they brought forth fruit- to themselves. In reality they had no fruit; but they went through the fruit-bearing process (Hos. 10:1). I write this because I have had all too many good friends in the Lord who at one time seemed so zealous and committed; but now they don't walk with us, and on their own admission, all their devotion and labour was somehow not really true spirituality. The Greek word *zelos* means both zeal in a good sense (2 Cor. 7:11,12; 9:2; 11:2)- and also it's translated jealousy, strife, envying (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20). I mean that a false spirituality can mask itself as true spirituality- and we must examine ourselves in this area.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13Zeal_A_Caveat.htm

August 5

2 Sam. 23

“Your house and your kingdom shall be established for ever before you” (2 Sam. 7:16) suggests that David would witness the establishment of Christ's eternal kingdom. This was therefore an indirect promise that he would be resurrected at Christ's return so that he could see with his own eyes the kingdom being set up world-wide, with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem. These things which were promised to David are absolutely vital to understand. David joyfully spoke of these things as “an everlasting covenant... this is all my salvation and all my desire” (2 Sam. 23:5). These things relate to our salvation too; rejoicing in them should likewise be all our desire. As with the promises to Abraham, if we are in Christ, all that is true of the promised descendant of David is in some way true of us if we are in Christ (Is. 55:3 cf. Acts 13:34).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/3-5.htm>

Jer. 26

Having pleaded with Judah to repent, Jeremiah goes on to say: “But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes” (Jer. 26:13,14 RV). It's as if he doesn't mind if they kill him because they misunderstand him, his passionate concern, far over-riding any desire for his own preservation, was that they should repent. Is this our passion for the lost, today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

Rom. 15, 16

We must perceive ourselves not so much as individual believers but as members of one body, both over space and over time. We must soberly ‘think of ourselves’ as someone who has something to contribute to the rest of the body, even if first of all we are not sure what it is (Rom. 15:3-8). We feel their weaknesses as if they are our own. Self interest must die; their wellbeing becomes all consuming. This is why men like Daniel and Nehemiah could feel that “we have sinned...”- not ‘they have sinned’. The Lord Jesus didn’t sin Himself but He took upon Himself our sins- to the extent that He felt a sinner, even though He wasn’t. Our response to this utter and saving grace is to likewise take upon ourselves the infirmities and sins of our brethren. If one is offended, we burn too; if one is weak, we are weak; we bear the infirmities of the weak (Rom. 15:1). But in the context of that passage, Paul is quoting from Is. 53:11, about how the Lord Jesus bore our sins on the cross. We live out the spirit of His cross, not in just bearing with our difficulties in isolation, but in feeling for our weak brethren.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/12.htm>

August 6

2 Sam. 24

According to 1 Chron. 21:5, there were 1,100,000 “men that drew sword” in Israel. According to 2 Sam. 24:9, there were 800,000 “valiant men” in Israel, according to the same census. There is no contradiction- rather the Samuel record is perceiving that there was a higher level of commitment. There were the enthusiasts, and those who merely could draw a sword. They were all living on different levels. We today have that same choice- and surely we will chose the higher levels?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-2Living_On_Different_Levels.htm

Jer. 27

The exiles asked for ‘deliverance’ - but they redefined ‘deliverance’ as meaning being allowed to live prosperously in the land of their captivity (Baruch 1:12 cp. 2:14), rather than being delivered from Babylon and returning to Judah. In a way, the book of Esther shows how God heard this prayer. But the book of Esther therefore has a sad ending, with the Jews prosperous, loved and respected, and even further away from returning to the land. Indeed, Baruch 2:21 records them misquoting Jer. 27:12 about the need to obey the King of Babylon during their captivity, and understanding this as meaning they were to remain in Babylon! Baruch 6:2 is perhaps the most serious example of misquoting and wilfully misunderstanding God’s word. Here, Baruch [as Jeremiah’s scribe] changes the prophecy of Jer. 29:10, that Israel were to be 70 years in Babylon and then return: “When you reach Babylon you will be there many years, a period seven generations long, after which I will bring you back”. The 70 years are turned into seven generations. This was precisely the mindset spoken against in Haggai 1:2, whereby the Jews reasoned that the time had not yet come to rebuild the temple. “The time” referred to the time spoken of by Jeremiah- but Baruch had re-interpreted the 70 years as meaning seven generations. And yet all this was done with a surface-level reverence for God’s word- the exiles considered themselves blessed because they had God’s law

(Baruch 4:4). Indeed, much of Baruch is a condemnation of idols and a demand to worship Yahweh.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_Of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

Mk. 1

The Lord had to command those who knew Him not to speak out that knowledge (Mk. 1:34 cp. 44)- because people knew Him, they quite naturally wanted to preach it. One cannot truly know the Lord and not tell others of Him. This is the power of true knowledge, believed as it should be believed.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1.htm>

August 7

1 Kings 1

It is possible to infer that for all their spiritual closeness, David and Bathsheba experienced a falling out of love immediately after the incident- as with many cases of adultery and fornication. In contrast to their previous close contact, she had to *send* to tell him that she was pregnant. In addition, before David's repentance he appears to have suffered with some kind of serious disease soon after it: " My loins are filled with a loathsome (venereal?) disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh" (Ps.38:7). It is even possible that David became impotent as a result of this; for we get the impression that from this point onwards he took no other wives, he had no more children, and even the fail safe cure for hypothermia didn't seem to mean much to David (1 Kings 1:1-4). Therefore " My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore" (Ps. 38:11) must refer to some kind of venereal disease. The Hebrew word translated " lovers" definitely refers to carnal love rather than that of friendship. It may be that an intensive plural is being used here- in which case it means 'my one great lover', i.e. Bathsheba. We have a choice this day to sin- and sin brings about its own appropriate punishment, and it never ultimately satisfies.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-4Davids_Repentance.htm

Jer. 28

Jeremiah and the true prophets had to work in competition with Hananiah and the false prophets, who replicated his signs and just slightly changed God's word, teaching that there was peace and safety in the ecclesia, and that God was actually pleased with His people (Jer. 28:3). Paul speaks of a time in the "last days" when this will happen again within the ecclesia. We today certainly can't assume we are a) living in the last days and b) in spiritually sound shape. We need to examine ourselves and not assume all is well for us as a community.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/9.htm>

Mk. 2

The Lord's men were accused of 'threshing' on the Sabbath because they rubbed corn in their hands (Mk. 2:23-28). The Lord could have answered 'No, this is a non-Biblical definition of

working on the Sabbath'. But He didn't. Instead He reasoned that 'OK, let's assume you're right, but David and his men broke the law because they were about God's business, this over-rode the need for technical obedience'. The Lord Jesus wasn't constantly correcting specific errors of interpretation. He dealt in principles much larger than this, in order to make a more essential, practical, useful point.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/7-2teaching_style_of_jesus.htm

August 8

1 Kings 2

Solomon justified himself in a very complex way, which has so much to warn us about. In Prov. 29:14 he wrote: "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever". Solomon is clearly referring to the promises to David, which he assumed were about him. He thought that because he had judged the poor harlots wisely, therefore he would be the promised Messiah. And this was just what David his father had hoped and expected of him. David had even asked Solomon to "do wisely" i.e. to show wisdom, in order that the promises to him about Messiah would be fulfilled (1 Kings 2:3 RVmg.). So *this* was surely one of Solomon's motives in giving them justice and being 'wise'; he sought to live out his father's expectations and to fulfil the requirements of the Messiah figure. Are we merely living out others' expectations, performing what appears to be spiritual living, when our heart is far from it?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-3Solomons_Self_Justification.htm

Jer. 29

There seems no reason to think that we should break fellowship with someone for not seeking God *enough*, if we admit that they are not seeking *evil*. Repentance and seeking God are related; thus Israel's restoration came when they were seeking God and (i.e.) repented (Jer. 29:12-14). However, there is good reason to think that Israel at this time were still spiritually weak; some of them had a *desire* to seek righteousness, and God accepted this. The connection between repentance and seeking God means that to withdraw fellowship from someone for not repenting enough, is to disfellowship them for not seeking God enough. The implication is that the rest of us have sought God enough- and therefore found Him. This is pure self-righteousness. In conclusion, God wants us to *be seeking* Him, but this *seeking* God does not imply *complete* repentance and forsaking of sin.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-3-6Seeking_God.htm

Mk. 3

Note how in Mk. 3:32 we read that "thy mother and brethren seek for thee", and in Mk. 1:37 the same word occurred: "all men seek for thee" ; and also in Lk. 2:45, of how Mary sought for Jesus. The similarity is such that the intention may be to show us how Mary had been influenced by the world's perception of Him. And we too can be influenced by the world's light hearted view of the Lord of glory. It's so easy to allow their patterns of language use to lead us into blaspheming, taking His Name in vain, seeing His religion as just a hobby, a social activity...

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-3-4Mary And Her Other Children.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/17-3-4Mary%20And%20Her%20Other%20Children.htm)

August 9

1 Kings 3

In tandem with a lack of conscience and real spiritual mindedness, an incredible hardness developed in Solomon. His wisdom initially made him soft and sympathetic, able to empathize with the mind of others (e.g. the mother of the baby); and even before his endowment with the gift of wisdom he had the humility to recognize that he was but a little child (1 Kings 3:7). But as his apostasy developed, he came to whip his people (1 Kings 12:14), treating them as he thought fools should be treated (Prov.26:3)- suggesting that he came to see himself as the only wise man, the only one truly in touch with reality, and therefore despising everyone else. And what of our humility now, compared to when we were first baptized?

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-8The Mind Of Solomon.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-8The%20Mind%20Of%20Solomon.htm)

Jer. 30

We read of God 'remembering' His covenant (Ex. 2:24; Lev. 26:42; Jer. 14:10,21); and of God 'not remembering' of forgetting the sins of His covenant people (Is. 43:25; Jer. 31:34). If words mean anything, this surely implies that sins which God once remembered, He then stops remembering and 'forgets'. Such language seems on one hand inappropriate to the God who by nature doesn't have to forget and can recall all things. But my point is, that He has willingly entered into the meaning of time which is experienced by those with whom He is in covenant relationship. He allows Himself to genuinely feel it like it is.

[http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant Relationship With God.htm](http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm)

Mk. 4

The light of the candlestick is both the believer (Mt. 5:15) and the Gospel itself (Mk. 4:21). We are the Gospel message to the people we mix with.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1.htm>

August 10

1 Kings 4, 5

Solomon's dualism is a warning to us. "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry" (1 Kings 4:20). This combines allusions to two different passages. Clearly there is reference to the fact that the Abrahamic promises had a primary fulfillment at this time. But the final phrase refers back to Israel's idolatry with the golden calf. It is as if the dualism within Solomon at this time - in being the primary fulfillment of the seed, and yet also being apostate - was fulfilled in Israel. We see elsewhere several indications that Solomon and Israel were closely connected (cp. Christ and the church). Another example of dualism is in Solomon's enthusiasm for Egyptian horses (1

Kings 4:26-28), although this was studied disobedience to Dt. 17:16- the very part of the law which new kings like Solomon copied out!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-1Solomons_Apostacy.htm

Jer. 31

We read of the new covenant that was made with us by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Heb. 8 proves that we are under the new covenant by quoting from Jer. 31, which is a prophecy of how in the future, Israel will repent, and will enter into the new covenant. Twice the Spirit uses Jer. 31:31 to prove to us that we are under the new covenant now (see Heb. 8:6-13 and 10:16-19); yet Jer. 31 is a prophecy of how natural Israel in the future will enter into that covenant, after their humiliation at the hands of their future invaders. So we are being taught that our entering of the covenant now is similar to how natural Israel will enter that covenant in the future. The point is really clinched by the way the Spirit cites Jer. 31 as relevant to us today. The reasoning goes that because Jer. 31:34 speaks of sin forgiven for those who accept the new covenant, therefore we don't need sacrifices or human priesthood now, because Jer. 31:34 applies to us. So therefore God writing in our hearts is going on now, too. This is confirmed by Paul's allusion to Jer. 31 in 2 Cor. 3:3. God wrote with His Spirit on our hearts, He made a new covenant on the covenant-tables of our heart. Likewise 2 Cor. 1:22: " Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the spirit in our hearts" . There are several prophecies which speak of Israel entering that new covenant, and what it will mean to them. All of them, in some sense, apply to us who are now in the new covenant. All of us should be earnestly seeking to appreciate the more finely exactly what our covenant with God means, exactly what covenant relationship with God really entails.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-3The_New_Covenant.html

Mk. 5

" Why make ye this ado and weep?" (Mk. 5:39) is unconsciously alluded to by Paul in Acts 21:13: " What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" . If this is a conscious allusion, it seems out of context. But as an unconscious allusion, it makes sense. Are we so full of reflection upon our Lord' words that we even unconsciously allude to them in speech?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-11Paul_And_Christ.html

August 11

1 Kings 6

The record of Solomon's building of his own house is clearly framed to reveal the sad fact that his zeal for God's house was only an outcome of his own natural zeal and hard work; but that tremendous energy was given far more scope in achieving his own ends. So often apparently active brethren are only so because the Truth is only compounding their own naturally active characters. For example, those who naturally like travelling can seem zealous Gospel preachers. The style of the record makes this clear of Solomon:

" So was he seven years in building (God's house)...

but Solomon was building his own house thirteen years" (1 Kings 6:38; 7:1).

His own house (cp. our family and mortgage) assumed almost double the importance of God's house. In this we see Solomon's apostasy. The architectural detail given concerning Solomon's house and "the house of the forest of Lebanon" seems to be given in such a format as to compare with that concerning God's house.

The porch of Solomon's house matches that of the temple (Ez. 8:7,16), which in Ezekiel's time was a place of apostasy. Solomon's own house was undeniably larger than God's, although built with the same layout (e.g. 1 Kings 6:2 cp. 7:2; 6:36 cp. 7:12; 5:1-5 cp. 7:13). The "another court within the porch" in his house seems to have been a replica of the Most Holy within God's house (1 Kings 7:8), yet it was here that Solomon's wives worshipped their idols. Likewise the record of the foundation stones (7:10) is similar to that of the temple foundations. The two pillars with their pomegranates and lily-work seem to have matched the open flowers of the temple, and they have ominous connections with Absalom's pillar of self-glorification (2 Sam. 18:18).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-1Solomons_Apostacy.htm

Jer. 32

With the Babylonian army besieging Jerusalem and every reason to be depressed, Jeremiah exalts in the creation record and has this as the basis for his faith that Yahweh's power is far from limited (Jer. 32:17). God's reply to this prayer is to repeat that yes, "I am the God of all flesh, is anything too hard for me?" ; His creative power is to be seen as the basis for Israel's Hope (Jer. 32:36-44). Likewise He taught Job the futility of having such metaphysical doubts about Him, of the joy there is all around us in creation regardless of our personal suffering...through an exposition of His power as creator. All this is why the disciples were inspired to faith that their prayers for deliverance would be answered by the recollection of the fact that God has created all things and therefore nothing is too hard for Him (Acts 4:24 RV). This is what our belief in creation should practically mean for us today.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/8.htm>

Mk. 6

There must have been certain similarities of personality type between the Lord and His mother. Thus in Lk. 2:33 Mary "marvelled", and the same word is used about Jesus in Mt. 8:10 and Mk. 6:6. The Lord at 12 years old displayed such piercing knowledge and spirituality, but it seems He returned to Nazareth and suppressed the expression of it (Lk. 2:51). This is why the villagers were so amazed when He stood up in the Nazareth synagogue and on the basis of Old Testament exposition, indirectly declared Himself the Messiah. He must have stored up so much knowledge and spirituality within Him, but hid it from the eyes of men. This was quite an achievement- to be perfect, and yet not to be noticed as somehow other-worldly. If we ask where He obtained this humility and ability from, it is clearly an inheritance from His dear mother, who stored up things in her heart and didn't reveal them to others, just quietly meditating over the years. It has been observed that it was unusual for the villagers to describe Jesus as "the son of Mary" (Mk. 6:3)- even if Joseph were dead, He

would have been known as Jesus-ben-Joseph. It could well be that this was a reflection of their perception of how closely linked Jesus was to His mother.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-2Abba_Father.htm

August 12

1 Kings 7

The promises God makes involve a solemn commitment by Him to us- the serious, binding nature of His oath to us is easy to forget. God swore to David “by my holiness” (Ps. 89:35). The Hebrew for “holiness” is the very same word translated “dedication”. David’s response to God’s dedication to him was to dedicate [s.w.] all the silver and gold which he had won from this world, to the service of God’s house (1 Kings 7:51; 1 Chron. 26:26; 2 Chron. 5:1). Our response to God’s dedication to us should be a like dedication of what we have to Him. Covenant relationship with God requires much of both Him and us. The case of David is a nice illustration of the meaning of grace. David wanted to *do* something for God- build Him a house, spending his wealth to do so. God replied that no, He wanted to build *David* a house. And He started to, in the promises He gave David. And David’s response to that grace is to still *do* something- to dedicate his wealth to God’s house, as God had dedicated Himself to David’s house. This is just how grace and works should be related in our experience.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/dp8.htm>

Jer. 33

We read in Jer. 33:11,26 of God ‘causing’ the captives to return. The Hebrew in this phrase is intriguing and impossible to adequately translate- the idea is ‘I will cause by my very own self and will’. The whole force of God’s personality and His passions and emotions was behind His causing Judah to return to the land. But most of them withstood it. And so as we spread the appeal of God to men to return to Him, there is a huge Divine ‘will’ behind our message, God Himself in all His passion is behind our appeals.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-11The_Returned_Exiles.htm

Mk. 7

Although the Lord was very hard in some ways upon the twelve, accusing them of “no faith” etc, whenever He spoke about them to others or to His Father, He was so positive about them. This is a valuable window onto His current mediation for us. The disciples were ordinary Jews who weren’t such righteous men; they didn’t wash before a meal, and the Pharisees criticized them. The Lord explained why this wasn’t so important; but the disciples still didn’t understand. And yet He justifies them to the Pharisees as if they did understand, and as if their non-observance of ritual washing was because of their great spiritual perception (Mt. 15:2,15,16). Surely the Lord imputed a righteousness to them which was not their own. Jesus had asked the disciples to be obedient to every jot and tittle of the teaching of the Scribes, because they “sit in Moses’ seat”. And yet when they are criticized for not doing what He’d asked them to do, for not washing hands before a meal, the Lord Jesus vigorously defends them by criticizing their critics as hypocrites (Mk. 7:2-8). Indeed, the Lord’s passion and anger with the critics comes out very clearly in the subsequent record of the incident; and it is

the essence of that passion which He has for us in mediating for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-7Disciples_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

August 13

1 Kings 8

The record of how Solomon spoke of his building of the temple can now be seen as blatant pride in his external appearance of spirituality; without the foregoing analysis of the *hints* of Solomon's pride, this wouldn't necessarily be a correct conclusion to reach; but with all these inspired links, surely we can read the following as pure pride: "Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven (hardly praying in his closet! Was Christ alluding to Solomon in Mt. 6:6?)...the house that I have built for thy name" (1 Kings 8:22,44). Solomon's frequent emphasis on the fact that *he* built the house makes a telling connection with the principle that God does not live in houses *built* by men (Acts 17:24).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-5Solomon_And_Pride.htm

Jer. 34

1 Cor. 8-10 and Rom. 14:23 seem to teach that what may be right for one man in his Biblical definition of conscience may be wrong for another in his conscience. According to this principle, God blessed the Rechabites for their obedience to their conscience, even regarding something He had not specifically commanded (Jer. 34:19). "Conscience" seems to be used in these passages in a way similar to how we generally use it in modern English.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-biblical_definition_of_conscience.htm

Mk. 8

The Lord "rebuked" Peter for seeking to stop Him die on the cross (Mk. 8:33). But the very same Greek word has occurred just prior in the narrative, when Peter has just declared Jesus to be "the Christ of God". The Lord responded by commending Peter for his blessed insight, but the record continues: "And [Jesus] straitly charged them [s.w. "rebuked"] them, and commanded them to tell [i.e. preach to] no man that thing", and He goes on to underline to them how He must suffer on the cross (Lk. 9:21). Why did the Lord both commend and rebuke Peter for discerning that He was indeed the Christ of God? Surely because, in the context, Peter understood Messiah to be someone who would there and then bring salvation without the cross. We see how there was something in Peter as there is in us all which somehow revolted at the idea of real cross carrying. And it was for the same reason that the Lord "straitly charged" [s.w. rebuked] those who wanted to blaze around the news that He was Messiah- because they didn't perceive that the Messiah must first suffer and rise again before being declared in fullness "Lord and Christ". But Peter, to his credit, did learn something from the Lord's rebuke and directive to follow Him in the sense of laying down his life. When he says "Though I should die with thee", he uses the word elsewhere translated "must" in connection with Lord's foreknowledge that He must suffer the death of the cross. Peter knew that he must share the cross- but the flesh was weak.

August 14

1 Kings 9

The hollowness of Solomon's early worship is made all too apparent by 2 Chron. 1:3-6; he worshipped in a tabernacle without the ark (i.e. the presence of God). The children of the Arab tribes "that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute" (1 Kings 9:21) suggests that Solomon made the same mistake as Israel in earlier days- he was a satisficer, he himself married into those tribes, and he wasn't obedient to the clear covenant of the land which was binding upon him.

The apostate religious system called " Babylon" in Revelation is evidently presented in the language of Solomon - at the time his kingdom was apparently flourishing, due to his righteousness:

1 Kings	Revelation
10:14	13:17,18
10:23	18:11,12,15
11:1,2	17:1,2
10:22	18:17,19
10:23	18:3,17
10:21,22	18:12
10:11	18:12
10:22	18:12
10:10,25	18:13
10:23	18:3,9
10:28	18:12
9:22	18:13
11:1,5 (Solomon influenced by Zidonian idolatry)	2:20 cp. 1 Kings 16:31
2 Chron. 9:15 (666)	13:18

Is *our* spirituality merely hollow...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-1Solomons_Apostacy.htm

Jer. 35

God expects us to understand much more than we think He does. Thus He condemned Israel in Jeremiah's time because He had spoken to them but they had not understood, and therefore they had not responded (Jer. 35:17). They heard the word, as we read it, but they didn't really hear His voice. They thought that getting to grips with Bible study was just for those who were into that kind of thing; with the result that God rejected them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-4Are_Christians_Too_Academic.htm

Mk. 9

We frequently commit the horror of limiting God in our attitude to prayer. All too often we see ourselves in the man who believed and yet still had unbelief: "If thou (Jesus) canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible" (Mk. 9:22,23). The man thought that Christ's power to help was limited: 'If you can do anything to help, well, please do'. The Lord Jesus turned things right round: 'If you can believe, anything's possible' - in other words, God can do anything, but His ability to directly respond to some particular need is limited by our faith, not by any intrinsic lack of ability within Himself. The man hadn't thought about this. He saw God as sometimes able to help a bit; Christ turned the man's words round to show that God's power is infinite, limited only by our faith.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-2limiting_god.htm

August 15

1 Kings 10

The description of Solomon's trading with Egypt is described with an unusual phrase- he brought forth chariots and horses out of Egypt by his hand (1 Kings 10:29). But the Hebrew phrase 'to bring forth by the hand' is used so very often to describe how God's mighty hand brought forth His people from Egypt- destroying the horses and chariots of Egypt in the process (Ex. 7:4,5; 13:3,14,16; 14:8; 32:11 and so often). This is such a major theme in Biblical history that the inspired choice of words is surely intentional and allusive in 1 Kings 10:29- for Solomon did the very opposite to what God did for His people. Solomon's hand brought forth and glorified the chariots and horses of Egypt, bringing them all the way from Egypt to Canaan. Solomon is thus being subtly set up as an anti-God figure- although apparently, all was well, the promises of blessing were being fulfilled etc. And is it the same with us...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-1Solomons_Apostacy.htm

Jer. 36

Jer. 34:2 was surely a conditional prophecy, even though no condition is given at the time: "I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire". But the Jews made some sort of repentance, releasing their slaves... and the Babylonian armies retreated (Jer. 34:21,22). Then they enslaved their brethren again- and, v.22 says, only because of this did the Babylonian armies return and burn Jerusalem. Thus the initial prophecy of burning with fire was conditional. And the Jews realized this and therefore repented. In similar vein, "the king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land" was capable of not being fulfilled, if Judah would only have repented (Jer. 36:3,7,29). So many different options lay before us this day, too... and God and the Angels surely eagerly watch our decisions.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-2Human_Response.htm

Mk. 10

You will have noticed how often the Gospels record that Jesus " answered and said..." . Yet it's often not clear whether anyone had asked a question, or said anything that needed a response (Mt. 11:25; 22:1; Mk. 10:24, 51; 11:14,22,33; 12:35; 13:2; 14:48; Lk. 5:22; 7:40; 8:50; 13:2; 14:3,5; 17:17; 22:51; Jn. 1:50; 5:19; 6:70; 10:32; 12:23,30; 16:31). If you go through this list, you will see how Jesus 'answered' / responded to peoples' unexpressed fears and questions, their unarticulated concerns, criticisms, feelings and agendas. This little phrase reveals how sensitive Jesus was. He saw people's unspoken, unarticulated needs and responded. He didn't wait to be asked. For Jesus, everybody He met was a question, a personal direct challenge, that He responded to. And of course this is how we should seek to be too. He treated each person differently. Jesus approved Zacchaeus' distribution of only half of his possessions- whilst demanding that the rich young man give away literally all. And He never seems to have demanded that those of His followers who owned houses should sell them.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-11.htm>

August 16

1 Kings 11

Solomon's heart was "turned away", or 'influenced' by his wives towards idols (1 Kings 11:3). Yet Solomon uses this very idea of the heart being turned or influenced in Prov. 2:2; 22:17 about the need to turn our hearts towards God's word. He taught, but did the very opposite. And perhaps Prov. 21:1 explains why he did this- he says there that Yahweh turns the heart of the King wherever He wishes- and so perhaps he thought that control of our thinking and inclinations is unnecessary, because somehow God will do it for us. And there's a lesson there for us, who may assume at times that God will somehow control our hearts for us, rather than our making a conscious effort towards mind control. Solomon went off to other gods because his heart was not at peace [Heb.- not at *shalom*] with the one true God- so says 1 Kings 11:4,5. We see here the upward spiral of spirituality- knowing we are forgiven, being comfortable and at peace with God, means we will not go after the idols of this world. For there is an endless searching for peace in the human heart. If we don't accept the forgiveness and peace that can come from God alone, we will seek peace in false ways. And that's just what Solomon did- for all his wisdom, he didn't personally know peace with God. Head knowledge doesn't give peace- for that is experiential.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-8The_Mind_Of_Solomon.htm

Jer. 37

When Zedekiah called Jeremiah out of the prison house to meet him and show him the word of God, he ought to have perceived that he was going through the very experience of Pharaoh with Joseph (Jer. 37:17,20). Jeremiah's desperate plea not to be sent back to prison to die there surely echoes that of Joseph to his brethren; for Jeremiah was let down like Joseph had been into a pit with no water in, so reminiscent of Joseph (Gen. 37:24). But Zedekiah didn't want to see all this; he should've listened to Jeremiah, as Pharaoh had listened to Joseph and saved himself. It was all potentially set up for him; but he refused to take note. And there are similar situations in our lives today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

Mk. 11

The Lord knew there would not be repentance by Israel. But He went to the fig tree seeking fruit, even though it wasn't the time for fruit (Mk. 11:13). He hoped against hope that there would be at least something, even though all of OT prophecy and precedent was dead against it. We too should have a hopeful spirit in our witness and appeals to others.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8.htm>

August 17

1 Kings 12

The paradox of servant leadership is found back in 1 Kings 12:7- if Rehoboam had been a servant of his people, then he would have ruled over them. In all ways, the Lord is our pattern. He was a servant of all, and so should we be. His servanthood dominated His consciousness.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1-8servant_leader.htm

Jer. 38

It was Zedekiah who personally 'burnt' Jerusalem- it was his stubbornness which led to the city's destruction in the sense that had he repented, the sinful city could have been saved (Jer. 38:23 RVmg). Our decisions have huge ramifications for others...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/9-4power_of_preaching.htm

Mk. 12

When asked which was the greatest of the commandments, the Lord replied that it was the fact that God is one. He saw the unity of God as a commandment that elicited action; and He says [note His grammar] that this plus the command to love our neighbour is the [singular] great commandment (Mk. 12:31). And He again combines these two commandments in Lk. 10:27,37, saying that to love God with all our heart is parallel with loving our neighbour and

showing mercy to him. He quoted two commandments as one, so deeply had He perceived that we can't claim to love God without loving our brother. How had He worked that out? Perhaps by daily reflecting upon what to many was merely a ritual saying of words. And we too read and have pass our lips, ideas which can work radical transformation in us *if only we will put meaning into the words* and reflect upon them.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-8.htm>

August 18

1 Kings 13

God's activity for others is partly dependent on the prayers of a third party. What stronger motivation could we have to pray earnestly for each other? The prayer of the man of God caused Jeroboam's hand to be healed (1 Kings 13:6). Again, the prayers of someone else can affect the fortunes of another in a way which would not happen if they just prayed for themselves. We therefore should be deeply praying for others as much of the time as we can!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/9-3limitation_of_prayer.htm

Jer. 39

The main lying helpless on the Jerusalem - Jericho road was surely modelled on Zedekiah being overtaken there by his enemies (Jer. 39:5). That weak, vacillating man basically loved God's word, he wanted to be obedient, but just couldn't bring himself to do it. And so he was, quite justly, condemned. It's as if the Lord saw in that wretched, pathetic man a type of all those He came to save. And even in this wretched position, the Lord will pick us up and carry us home. This gives a fine, fine insight into His sensitivity to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-3The_Sensitivity_Of_Jesus.htm

Mk. 13

Mark's record of the Lord's trial is not merely a historical account. It's framed in terms of our need to testify for our faith too. The Lord's example in His time of suffering was and is intended to be our example and inspiration, in that we are to in a very practical sense enter into His sufferings. Mark records the Lord's prediction that His people would have to witness before both Jewish and Gentile authorities (Mk. 13:9-13)- and then Mark goes on in the next chapter to describe Jesus doing just this. The Lord asked His suffering followers not to prepare speeches of self-defence- perhaps exemplified and patterned for us in the way that He remained silent before His accusers. Peter is recorded as denying Christ three times- just as the Romans interrogated Christians and asked them to three times deny Christ. The Christians were also asked to curse, or *anathematizein*, Jesus. And when we read of Peter's cursing, the same word is used. We're left with the impression that Peter actually cursed Christ. And so Mark, who was likely writing the Gospel on Peter's behalf, is showing that Peter, the leader of the church, actually pathetically failed to follow his Lord at this time. And yet the Gospel of Mark was being distributed to Christians who were being dragged before Jewish and Roman courts. The idea was surely to give them an example and encouragement from Peter's failure, rather than portray a positive example of a man overcoming the temptation to curse

and deny Christ. But this was how the Lord used Peter- as an example from failure for all of us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-1-3Peters_Conversion.htm

August 19

1 Kings 14

God's words of future prophecy are "true and faithful... they are come to pass" (Rev. 21:6 RV). They are as good as done as soon as they are uttered, so certain are they of fulfillment. Thus 1 Kings 14:14: "The Lord *shall* raise him up a king...but what? Even now". This is the way to understand those passages which appear to teach that both Jesus and ourselves existed physically before our birth. God doesn't completely express Himself in our terms and language (although of course to some degree He does). There is a degree to which God is God, and He expresses Himself as He is. We must bring ourselves to accept His perspective. Indeed, faith is the ability to believe that what God has said will actually happen physically, and that therefore we can live as if we see that future physical event as actually having happened. In other words, faith is about adopting God's time-less perspective.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-1God_and_Time.html

Jer. 40

Jeremiah chose to live with those whom he had been told were the "evil figs" who wouldn't repent- in the hope that they would (Jer. 40:6), just as Isaiah and Ezekiel still seem to have held out hope that Israel would repent despite having been told at the start of their ministry that they would not be listened to. This hoping against hope that God will change His stated predictions about human lack of response is surely not defiance of God, but rather a recognition of His great sensitivity to human repentance, and that God changing His mind is a common Bible phenomena.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a2-2god_changing_his_mind.htm

Mk. 14

Not only did Jesus 'answer' to the needs of others, but He Himself was a silent, insistent question that had to be responded to. He came and found the disciples sleeping, and they didn't know what to *answer* Him (Mk. 14:40). His look, the fact that when facing super exhaustion and sleep deprivation He endured in prayer...this was something that demanded, and demands, an answer- *even if we can't give it*. He responds / 'answers' to us, and we have to respond / answer to Him. This is how His piercing sensitivity, coupled with the height of His devotion, compels the building of real relationship between ourselves and this invisible Man.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-11.htm>

August 20

1 Kings 15

Asa and Jehoshaphat removed the high places, but in a sense they didn't (1 Kings 15:14 cp. 2 Chron. 14:5; 17:6 cp. 20:33). We read of how the land was purged of Baal, Sodomites etc.; but in a very short time, we read of another purge being necessary. Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah all made major purges within a space of 80 years. Jeremiah therefore condemns the Jews who lived at the time of Josiah's reformation for not *knowing* God in their hearts. Asa gathered the gold and silver vessels back into the temple- and then went and used them to make a political treaty. He *apparently* treated them as God's riches, but then in reality he used them as his own (1 Kings 15:18, 15). Many a Western Christian has this very same tendency. We too must ask ourselves whether our spirituality is really just a product of the crowd mentality; as the crowd shouted one day " Hosanna to the Son of David" , a few days later they wanted Jesus to be delivered rather than Barabbas, but within minutes they were persuaded to cry for the crucifixion of the Son of God. Church life, Bible studies, the breaking of bread... inevitably, there is a crowd mentality developed here. There is a feeling of devotion which wells up within us as a community, as an audience, as we sit there, as we stand in praise and worship together. But the *real* spirituality is far deeper than this. We must seriously ask whether our spirituality, our feelings of devotion, our true repentance, are *only* stimulated by these meetings?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-4True_Repentance.htm

Jer. 41

Jer. 41:1,2 present the theme of a betrayal at the 'breaking of bread'. David lamented that his own trusted familiar friend, with whom he broke bread, had betrayed him; and this became prophetic of how the Lord was betrayed by Judas. Circumstances repeat between the lives of God's servants so that we might have comfort and hope from the Scriptures.

Mk. 15

The faithful women who literally followed Him to the cross are described as *also* having followed Him in Galilee (Mk. 15:41), as if their following then and their literal following of Him to Golgotha were all part of the same walk. Our following of Him and His principles when the going is good will enable us to follow Him in the harder times.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/12.htm>

August 21

1 Kings 16

We can limit God's plans to save others in the ecclesia by our attitude to them. We can make others stumble from the path to His salvation. Baasha made other people sin and thus provoke God to anger; his own sin and that of the people are described in identical language, to portray how he influenced them (1 Kings 16:2,7).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

Jer. 42

The tone of God's speeches in Jeremiah varies wildly, moving abruptly from outraged cries of pain to warm entreaties of love, and then to desperate pleas for a new start. He is responding like a jilted lover, who gained His Israel by wooing them in the wilderness. He felt the pain of Israel's rejection, and went through very human-like reactions to this. The book of Hosea shows all this lived out in a real human life. Hosea was representative of God, and yet he married a slut called Gomer, and in their life together they portrayed graphically the pain of God's relationship with His people. The image of God as the wounded lover which we meet in Hosea and Jeremiah ought to deeply impress us. The God who created all of existence subjects Himself to such humiliation from His creation. One is almost haunted by the reality of a God who lets our response to Him count that much. It inspires us to implore Israel and all men, on our hands and knees, to not reject the love of God which is in the Gospel. I feel I want to beseech Israel for the sake of God's hurt and pain over them alone, if for no other reason. Just think of His emotional response to them. He tells them He has punished them less than their iniquities deserve; but then He feels He's been too hard on them. He tells Jeremiah not to pray for them as He won't hear him; but then Jeremiah does pray and God hears and changes His mind as a result of this (Jer. 42:7,10).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a5.htm>

Mk. 16

Whether the woman of Mk. 14:8 really understood that she was anointing His body for burial is open to question. But the Lord's positivism graciously imputed this motive to her. The women who came to the garden tomb weren't looking for the risen Lord; they came to anoint the body (Mk. 16:3). But their love of the Lord was counted to them as seeking Him (Mt. 28:5). The Lord looks at us today with this same positive spirit.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15-2The_Positivism_Of_Jesus.htm

August 22

1 Kings 17

Elijah bursts upon the scene in 1 Kings 17:1, describing the Lord as the One "Before whom I stand". 'Standing before the Lord' refers to prayer- Ps. 106:23; Ezra 9:15; Jer. 15:1; 18:20. To live a life standing before the Lord is to live a life of prayer. Hence David and Paul say that prayer can be continual- in that life becomes a lived out prayer, with the practice of living in the presence of God. And straight away we ask ourselves, in lives just as busy as those of David and Paul, whether our self-talk, our minute by minute inner consciousness, is "before the Lord"...or merely the sheer and utter vapidness of the 21st century mind.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-1Elijah_And_prayer.htm

Jer. 43

The implication of Jer. 43 is that Jeremiah went down to Egypt with his people- a people who hated him and disobeyed him, considering him a false prophet. They disobeyed God by going down to Egypt, they nullified the potential for the fulfilment of the prophecies of restoration (for them, at least). And yet Jeremiah stuck with this wayward people, he didn't quit with them or show his disagreement by separating from them.

1 Cor. 1, 2

The Corinthians were converted “not [so much] through words of wisdom, but through the demonstration of the spirit” (1 Cor. 2:4). The essence of all this is the same today as it was then- the revelation of the person of Jesus isn’t solely through Bible reading and getting the interpretation right; it’s through a living community, His body. It is there that we will see His Spirit / personality in action. I don’t refer to miraculous gifts- but to the spirit / mind / disposition / essence of the Lord, man and saviour Jesus. And that’s why the saying is so true, that ‘the truth is caught not taught’- the community of believers, collectively and individually, propagates the faith and cause of Jesus by who they are, by their spirit, far more effectively than by the doctrines they teach. And yet there is a growing trend to follow the path of the Roman Catholic church- to replace live fellowship of persons by an institution, and to replace the faith which works by love by a cold creed.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

August 23

1 Kings 18

Elijah really is the great example of believing that what we have prayed for, we have already received. He tells Ahab that he hears “the sound of a abundance of rain”, well before the prayer for rain had even begun to be answered (1 Kings 18:41). Elijah announced that there was not to be dew nor rain but “according to my word” (1 Kings 17:1). Here is an example of being sure of God’s will in what we pray for. If the Lord’s words abide in us, then we will ask what *we* will and it will be done; yet John also records that if we ask according to *God’s* will, it will be done for us. Our will and that of the Father come to co-incide as His word takes an ever deeper lodgment in our consciousness. And this is how close Elijah must have been to knowing the will of God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-1Elijah_And_prayer.htm

Jer. 44

The rejected are witnesses against themselves (Is. 44:9; Mt. 23:31). Herein lies the crass folly and illogicality of sin. Jeremiah pleaded with Israel: "Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls [i.e. yourselves], to cut off from you man and woman...that ye might cut yourselves off" (Jer. 44:7,8, cp. how Jerusalem cut her own hair off in 7:29). In the same passage, Yahweh is the one who does the cutting off (Jer. 44:11); but they had cut themselves off. Likewise as they had kindled fire on their roofs in offering sacrifices to Baal, so Yahweh through the Babylonians would set fire to those same houses (Jer. 32:29). Condemnation is therefore only for those who have condemned themselves... and this gives much scope for self-examination.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

1 Cor. 3

Paul seems to have assumed that all of us would preach and make converts (not leave it to just some of our community): he speaks of how " every man" in the ecclesia builds upon the

foundation of Christ, but how he builds will be judged by fire. If what he has built is burnt up at the judgment, he himself will be saved, but not what he has built (1 Cor. 3:10-15). I would suggest that the 'building' refers to our converts and work with other believers. If they fail of the Kingdom, we ourselves will be saved, but our work will have been in vain. This parable also suggests that the salvation of others, their passing through the fire at the judgment, is dependent upon how we build. This may be hyperbole to make a point, but it is a powerful encouragement that we are *all* elders and preachers, and we *all* have a deep effect on others' spirituality.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

August 24

1 Kings 19

The whole incident on Horeb was to make Elijah see the supremacy of the still small voice; that it is in humble, quiet service rather than fiery judgment of others that the essence of God and spirituality is to be found. But God had prepared Elijah for this earlier. Elijah had to hide by the brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:3) for three and a half years (Lk. 4:25,26). Elijah was characterized by wearing a hairy garment like sackcloth (2 Kings 1:8 RV). In Rev. 11:3,6 we meet another Elijah figure- also clothed in sackcloth, with the power to bring fire down from Heaven, who for three and a half years...prophesies / preaches. We would expect Elijah to have been preaching during his time hidden by Cherith- but there is not a word of this in the record. Could it not be that the Father wishes to show us what He was then trying to teach Elijah- that the essential prophetic witness is through us being as we are, the still small voice of witness through example...? It is also significant that the triumph on Horeb involved making an offering on an altar of Yahweh which was in one of the "high places" (1 Kings 18:30)- whereas Israel were repeatedly criticized for offering on these "high places" and not in Jerusalem. Elijah even criticizes Israel for throwing down these "high places" altars of Yahweh (1 Kings 19:10,14). Surely Elijah knew that the use of the high places was not what Yahweh ideally wanted; and yet he was driven to use a high place in this way. And with us, God will work through circumstances to remove from us the crutches of mere religion, to challenge the essence of our faith and relationship with Him. The way Ezekiel had to eat unclean food and defile himself is another such example.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-3How_God_Worked_With_Elijah.htm

Jer. 45, 46

Baruch, the faithful scribe of Jeremiah 36, had to be reminded later to stop seeking great things for himself (Jer. 45:5). He couldn't maintain the intensity of commitment to the end; and we too face a constant struggle to not slip from earlier levels of commitment to the Lord.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

1 Cor. 4, 5

In the context of the self-examination command in 1 Cor. 11, Paul is speaking of the need to completely focus our attention on the sacrifice of Christ. Yet this command must have its basis in the directive for Israel to search their house for leaven before eating the Passover

(Ex. 12:19). "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven...of malice and wickedness" (1 Cor. 5:8). The disciples' question at the first breaking of bread, "Lord, is it I?" is another prototype of the command to examine ourselves at the feast (Mt. 26:22). Combining Paul's command to examine ourselves that we are really focusing upon our Lord's sacrifice, and the Exodus allusion which implies that we should examine our own lives for wickedness, we conclude that if we properly reflect upon Christ and His victory for us, then we will inevitably be aware of our own specific failures which Christ really has vanquished. But this will come as a by-product of truly grasping the fullness of the Lord's victory. The Passover was to be a public proclamation to the surrounding world of what God had done for Israel. Likewise our feast 'shows forth' (Greek: publicly declares') the Lord's death. Our memorial meeting should therefore include a degree of openly declaring to others what spiritual deliverances the Lord has wrought for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-5Importance_of_Breaking_of_Bread.html

August 25

1 Kings 20

God tried to correct Elijah's despisal of the other prophets of the Lord. Elijah was in a cave, and was also fed bread and water- just as the other prophets were (1 Kings 18:4). And yet Elijah didn't see, or didn't want to see, that connection- after having been reminded of this experience of the other prophets, he claims that "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord" (1 Kings 18:22)- he wrongly believed that all other valid prophets had been slain (1 Kings 19:10). In fact the record shows how that during Elijah's lifetime there were other prophets of Yahweh active in His service (1 Kings 20:13,35). And yet the lesson is that God still works through the conceited, the spiritually superior, those who despise their brethren. God didn't give up on Elijah because he was like this, and neither should we give up in our relationship with such brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-2-3Elijah_And_Others.htm

Jer. 47

Jeremiah responds to the prophecy he has to utter against the hated Philistines by begging the Father to limit these judgments, presumably on account of their repentance: "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still" (Jer. 47:6). Think too of how he almost interrupts a prophecy he is giving to Israel about judgment to come by appealing for them *therefore* to repent (Jer. 4:13,14). Our handling of the prophecies of judgment to come should have a like effect upon us: they should inspire us to an inevitable witness and pleading with God for others. Each of our days cannot be just 'the same old scene' when we see the world in this way.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-13-2Passionate_Christian_Living.htm

1 Cor. 6

If we believe in Christ's resurrection, we will therefore repent, confess our sins and know His forgiveness. Thus believing in His raising and making confession of sin are bracketed together in Rom. 10:9,10, as both being essential in gaining salvation. Because He rose,

therefore we stop committing sin (1 Cor. 6:14). We can't wilfully sin if we believe in the forgiveness His resurrection has enabled. Men should repent not only because judgment day is coming, but because God has commended repentance to us, He has offered / inspired faith in His forgiveness *by the resurrection of Christ* (Acts 17:30,31 AV mg.). The empty tomb and all the Lord's glorification means for us should therefore inspire personal repentance; as well as of itself being an imperative to go and share this good news with a sinful world, appealing for them to repent and be baptized so that they too might share in the forgiveness enabled for them by the resurrection.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/2.htm>

August 26

1 Kings 21

In 1 Kings 21:21 Elijah simply announces to Ahab: "Behold I will bring evil upon thee...". We expect this to be prefaced by a "Thus saith the Lord"- but Elijah was so close to God he assumed he was speaking directly from Him. And yet Elijah doesn't repeat what God had told him to say in v. 19. Was he too familiar with God? Assuming he knew God's will and words? But it must be said that he improves- in 2 Kings 1:6 he says that what he says is the word of Yahweh, and he repeats verbatim what he was told to say. We too know God's word. We know the Bible text well. But this can lead to an assumption that we speak for God; that we must be right in all our attitudes and positions we adopt on issues.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-2-2Playing_God.htm

Jer. 48

We will appeal to men with conviction, as Isaiah's heart cried out for Moab like a young heifer about to be slaughtered, feeling for them in what would come upon them, and desperately appealing for their repentance. Because the Moabites would cry out and their voice would be heard, "*my heart shall cry out for Moab*" (Is. 15:4,5,8). As the Lord Jesus is a representative Saviour, we too must feel the judgment that is to come upon others, and in that sense cry out for them as they will cry out. "Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab" (Is. 16:7)- but Isaiah, feeling for them so strongly, also howled for them; "*my bowls shall sound like an harp for Moab*" (16:11). And he felt the same for his own people, Israel. He repeatedly pronounces "woe" upon them (Is. 3:9; 5:8,11,18,20,21,22; 8:11), and yet in that very context he can exclaim: "Woe is *me*" in chapter 6; he identified with them to the point of also feeling unworthy and under woe [in this clearly typifying the Lord's identity with us]. This level of love inspired Jeremiah to adopt the same attitude (Jer. 48:20,31-34); he too howled for those whose howling in condemnation he prophesied (Jer. 48:31 s.w.). As Moab cried out like a three year old heifer (Jer. 48:34), so did Isaiah for them (Is. 15:5). All this was done by Isaiah and Jeremiah, knowing that Moab hated Israel (Is. 25:10) and were evidently worthy of God's condemnation. But all the same they loved them, in the spirit of Noah witnessing to the mocking world around him. Our knowledge of this world's future means that as we walk the streets and mix with men and women, our heart should cry out for them, no matter how they behave towards us, and there should be a deep seated desire for at least some of them to come to repentance and thereby avoid the judgments to come.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-13-2Passionate_Christian_Living.htm

1 Cor. 7

Whatever we do, doing all to the glory / praise of God, working for human masters as if we are serving the Lord Christ. But a word of caution must be sounded here. "If thou canst become free, use it rather" (1 Cor. 7:21 RV), Paul wrote to slaves. We are inevitably tied down with the things of this life; but if we can be made free, to serve God directly, as usefully as possible, then surely we should seek to do this. Take early retirement. You can chose to remain at work, and of course, you can glorify God. But you can devote your life and free time to the work of the Gospel, and bring dozens to the knowledge of Christ who wouldn't otherwise have had it. I'd say, and I interpret Paul to say likewise: "If you may be made free, then use it rather". We should aim to "surrender yourself to the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Ps. 37:7).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/21.htm>

August 27

1 Kings 22

The notion of a court of Heaven is a major Biblical theme. The visions of 1 Kings 22:19-23, Isaiah 6 and Rev. 4 show God seated on a throne with Angels before Him, bringing information and requests to Him and departing with commands to obey; the idea of a council in Heaven is clearly hinted at in Job 1; Gen. 1:26; Ps. 89:7. God sitting on a throne implies that each request or piece of information presented is 'judged' and an appropriate decision made. The 'case' of the adversaries to God is presented by a 'satan' Angel. Ps. 11:4,5 describes the scene: "The Lord's throne is in Heaven (mirrored by the Mighty Angel of Israel being enthroned over the Mercy Seat in the temple): His eyes (Angels) behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous (who are in His presence by their Angel), but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth". Rev. 12:10 may be understood in this context: "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night". When we read that Enoch "had witness borne to him that he had been well pleasing unto God" (Heb. 11:6 RV), this is courtroom language. Could it not be that his representative / guardian Angel in the court of Heaven had made this testimony to God Almighty? Likewise Lk. 21:13 speaks of how when a believer is persecuted, "it shall turn to you for a testimony". What does this really mean? For me, the most satisfactory explanation would be that the Angels give a positive testimony of the faithful believer in the court of Heaven. And they are discussing you, this day.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

Jer. 49

It's often been commented that God is beyond or even outside of our kind of time. God pre this present creation may have been like that, and He of course has the capacity and possibility to be like that. But it seems to me that particularly in connection with those with whom He is in relationship, He chooses to not exercise that possibility. Instead, God Almighty throws Himself into our experience, by limiting Himself to our kind of time- with all the suspense, hope, excitement, joy, disappointment which this involves. Time and again we read of how God says He is "shaping evil against you and devising a plan" against His enemies (Jer. 18:11; Jer. 26:3; Jer. 49:20,30; Jer. 50:45; Mic. 2:3; 4:12). For the faithful, He

says that He is making plans for them for good and not for evil, “to give you a future” (Jer. 29:11). The Lord Jesus had this sort of thing in mind when He spoke of how the Kingdom will have been being *prepared* for the faithful from the beginning of the world (Mt. 25:34; Mt. 20:23). The idea of God 'preparing' implies that there is therefore a gap between the plan being made, and it being executed- hence “The Lord has both planned and done what He spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon” (Jer. 51:12; Jer. 4:28; Lam. 2:17; Is. 22:11; Is. 37:26; Zech. 1:6; Zech. 8:14). This 'gap' is significant when we come to consider the idea of God's 'repentance' or change of mind- stating something is going to happen, but then changing His mind because of human behaviour during the 'time gap' between the statement and its' execution. It's an amazing thought- that we today can influence God...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

1 Cor. 8, 9

The New Testament develops the theme of 'living in the spirit'. We can often understand 'spirit' in the NT to mean the dominant desire, the way of life, the essential intention, the ambience of a man's life. The idea of life in the Spirit is often placed in opposition to that of living under a legal code. We are asked to live a way of life, rather than mere obedience to a certain number of specific propositions. And yet whilst we are free from legal codes, we aren't free to do as we like. We are under “the law of the spirit” (Rom. 8:2), “the law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21). The law of Christ isn't only His specific teaching, but the person of the real, historical Jesus. This is the standard of appeal which should mould the spirit of our lives.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

August 28

2 Kings 1, 2

The word for “Mantle” is translated “glory” in Zech. 11:3; Elijah wrapped his presence in his own glory, rather than face up to the implications of God's glory. A desire for our own glory prevents us perceiving God's glory. Perhaps Elijah was being pseudo-humble, misquoting to himself a Biblical precedent in all this, namely that the cherubim wrapped their faces (Is. 6:2). In this case, Elijah was doing a false impersonation of the cherubim, manifesting himself before God's manifestation of Himself. Only at the very end does Elijah cast away his mantle (2 Kings 2:13), his human strength, allowing himself to merge with God's glory. He should have cast away his mantle earlier, when he stood before the still small voice on Horeb. The question of 1 Kings 19:13 “Why are you still here, Elijah?” may imply that Elijah should have allowed himself to be carried away by the cherubim, he should have surrendered himself to the progress of God's glory, rather than so obsessively insist upon his own personal rightness and the wrongness of others. And this was why God's ultimate response to Elijah's attitude on Horeb was to dismiss him from his prophetic ministry and enstate Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:16). Elijah seems to have finally learnt his lesson, for he calls Elisha to the ministry by 'passing by' Elisha as in a theophany, taking off his mantle and throwing it upon Elisha (1 Kings 19:19). He realized that he had hidden behind that mantle, using it to resist participating in the selfless association with God's glory [rather than his own] to which he was called. But he got there in the end; hence the enormous significance of Elijah giving up his mantle when he finally ascends to Heaven in the cherubim chariot (2 Kings 2:13).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-4Elijah_And_Angels.htm

Jer. 50

Time and again the prophets describe the judgments to fall upon Israel in the same terms as they speak of the condemnations of the surrounding nations (e.g. Jer. 50:3,13). The message was clear: rejected Israel would be treated as Gentiles. Even if we are separated from this world externally, we can still act in a worldly way, and share the world's condemnation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

1 Cor. 10

The ongoing nature of the act of baptism was outlined in baptism's greatest prototype: the passage of Israel through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2). They were baptized into that pillar of cloud (cp. the water of baptism), but in fact the cloud and fire which overshadowed them at their Red Sea baptism continued throughout their wilderness journey to the Kingdom. They went " *through* fire and *through* water" (Ps. 66:12) throughout their wilderness years, until they entered the promised rest (cp. the Kingdom). Likewise, the great works of Yahweh which He showed at the time of their exodus from Egypt (cp. the world) and baptism at the Red Sea were in essence *repeated* throughout their wilderness journey (Dt. 7:19). Therefore whenever they faced discouragement and an apparent blockage to their way, they were to remember how God had redeemed them at their baptism, and to realize that in fact His work was still ongoing with them (Dt. 20:1).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

August 29

2Kings 3

Elisha told the apostate king of Israel: " Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, *I would not look toward thee, nor see thee*" (2 Kings 3:14). This suggests that our efforts for others, indeed, simply who we are, can affect God's attitude to third parties... the power and responsibility we have is awesome.

Jer. 51

So much of the Bible is a radical, counter-cultural call to see our present world for what it is, and to perceive that the ways of God simply can't be mixed in, watered down or compromised with the way of this world. Naturally such criticisms of Babylon and its gods would have been a very risky thing- for Babylon had shown grace to many Jews and they were doing well in rising up the social and economic ladder there. To speak of Babylon in the hostile way the prophets do was a brave and unpopular thing (Is. 13,14,21,46; Jer. 50,51; often in Zechariah). We know from Ez. 8, Jer. 44 and Zech. 5 that many Jews had accepted the idols of their Babylonian conquerors, rather like Ahaz did after his defeat by Assyria (2 Kings 16:10). The spirit of ridiculing the idolatry of Babylon whilst living in it, waiting the call to leave, is so relevant to modern Christians working, living and waiting in latter day Babylon.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

1 Cor. 11

Those who are sleeping at the Lord's coming will be found unworthy, so says the spirit in Thessalonians. But in the Lord's parable, *all* the virgins are sleeping at His coming, wise and foolish alike. They were all living on far too low a level, and yet the Lord will save them [us] by grace alone. God accepts we aren't going to make it as we should. There ought to be no schism in the body (1 Cor. 12:25), but He realizes that inevitably there will be (1 Cor. 11:19).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

August 30

2Kings 4

Those who know God's word will find encouragement there in their experiences of life- but that encouragement is dependent upon their appreciation of the word, and their ability to see the similarities between their situation and that of others who have gone before.. Thus the Lord told the disciples to feed the crowd, when they had nothing to give them (Mk. 6:37). He was actually quoting from 2 Kings 4:42, where the man of God told his servant to do the same. He gave what bread he had to the people, and miraculously it fed them. The disciples don't seem to have seen the point; otherwise, they would have realized that if they went ahead in faith, another such miracle would likely be wrought. But it seems that God almost over-ruled them to make the response of the faithless servant of 2 Kings 4:43: " Shall we...give them to eat?" (Mk. 6:37). They were almost 'made' to do this to make them later see the similarity with the 2 Kings 4 incident. If they had been more spiritually aware at the time, the Lord's quotation would have been a fillip for their faith.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

Jer. 52

Reflect how Daniel refused to eat the food sent to him from the King of Babylon; but God arranged for this very thing to be sent to Jehoiachin as a sign of His recognition of his repentance (Jer. 52:34)! God saw that Jehoiachin wasn't on Daniel's level, and yet he worked with him. How we treat each other should be a reflection of how God treats us. We can make concessions for each other's weaknesses, accepting that some will live on higher levels than others; or we can demand a rigid standard of spirituality from them. I would venture to say that neither of these attitudes are *morally* wrong in themselves; it's just that as we judge, so we will be judged.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-4Jephthah%27s_Vow_Principle.htm

1 Cor. 12, 13

The purpose of the judgment seat is more for our benefit than God's; it will be the ultimate self-revelation of ourselves. Then we will know ourselves, just as God knows us (1 Cor. 13:12). Through a glass, darkly, we can now see the outline of our spiritual self (1 Cor.

13:11,12), although all too often we see this picture in the spiritual mirror of self-examination, and then promptly forget about it (James 1:23,24).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-2-1The_Hidden_Man.html

August 31

2Kings 5

Naaman was allowed to bow himself before Rimmon (2 Kings 5:18) for the sake of losing his position. Yet the higher level would surely have been, as Daniel's friends, not to bow down to an idol. And when we ask what the rest of the Jews in Babylon did on that occasion, it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that they took the lower level which Naaman did- and bowed down. The fact God makes such concessions to human weakness is both a comfort and a challenge.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Lam. 1

Jeremiah could say in truth that "mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people. Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission...mine eye affecteth mine heart" (Lam. 3:48-51). What he saw with his eye affected his mind / heart. Let us not see the doom of others, the pain and suffering of another life, and walk on by not permanently moved. What we see should affect our heart- if we have a heart that bleeds. And a bleeding heart doesn't merely bleed- it *does* something concrete, in prayer and action. Consider other examples of the bleeding heart of Jeremiah:

- "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth ["my stomach is in knots", the Net Bible], for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city" (Lam. 2:11)

- "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water... my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled" (Lam. 1:16,20).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

1 Cor. 14

All the Corinthian Christians could have been prophets, all could have spoken with tongues (1 Cor. 14:1,5)- but the reality was that they didn't all rise up to this potential, and God worked through this, in the sense that He 'gave' some within the body to be prophets and tongue speakers (1 Cor. 12:28-30). He works in the body of His Son just the same way today, accommodating our weaknesses and lack of realization of our potentials, and yet still tempering the body together to be functional. The fact we fail to realize our potentials doesn't mean God quits working with us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-2limiting_god.htm

September

September 1

2 Kings 6

Elisha has an apparent roughness with the Almighty that could only surely come from his knowing that God fully viewed and knew his inner feelings. "Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" (2 Kings 6:33 RV) expresses his exasperation, in words which are quite shocking to read- until we realize that our own hearts have probably harboured such basic feelings, even though never verbalized. The intimacy of other prophets with God is reflected in the roughness and familiarity which they sometimes use- take Ps. 44:23,24: "Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, Lord? Awake! Do not cast us off for ever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-4God_Sees_And_Knows_All.htm

Lam 2

Jeremiah's bowels were turned for his people, because he felt that *he* had shared in their sin. The arrows of God entered into his "reins", his kidneys, and this is why he so cried out (Lam. 3:13). But God's arrows were against a sinful Judah (Lam. 2:4). Yet Jeremiah so identified with them that he felt they had entered *him*; and this is why he could cry out in the way he did. Even though he hadn't rebelled, he felt that because they had, so had he, as he was so identified with them. He reached such a level of grief through identifying himself so closely with those for whom he grieved. Time and again, the descriptions of his personal suffering and grief are expressed in the terms of the very sufferings which he had prophesied as coming upon a sinful Israel. And so with us, if we feel and show a willful solidarity with the people of this world, with our brethren, then we will grieve for them. If we maintain the selfish, 21st century detachedness from them, then we will never have a heart that bleeds for them. Jeremiah could so easily have shrugged his shoulders and reasoned that Judah had had their chance; and it wasn't on his head. But he didn't. His attitude was that he had to seek the sheep until he found it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

1 Cor. 15

Paul rejoiced daily in the fact the Corinthians had been baptized (1 Cor. 15:31). Many a photo taken at baptism reflects this same joy amongst us today. Sower and reaper rejoice together (Jn. 4:36). To hold on to the Truth was described as holding on to the rejoicing of the hope unto the end (Heb. 3:6). But if we lose joy, we have lost our faith. It was the same with OT Israel. "The vine [of Israel] is withered...for joy is withered"; the people of God were to be a people of joy, and when their joy was no more, they were no longer God's people; for "joy and gladness" were cut off from the house of God (Joel 1:12,16). The experience of joy is the litmus test for a community of God's people. This thought gives rise to some sober self-examination, especially for those who may have come to feel that 'holding the faith' is a matter of glumly trudging onwards through this evil world, grimly gripping hold of our statement of faith as we bemoan the state of those around us. If we are not a community based around reaching out into the world, there will be no joy for us. Those individuals and ecclesias who have effectively given up preaching are markedly lacking in the joy that should characterise the true life in Christ. Joy and praise are not merely emotions of little worth; they

are legitimate and powerful motivators to concrete action. For the Macedonians “the abundance of their joy... abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (2 Cor. 8:2). Their joy for what the Lord had done for them, for the “abundance” [s.w.] of His grace and giving to them (Rom. 5:17), led to their giving to the poor.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-7Joy_Of_Faith.htm

September 2

2 Kings 7

The Lord used the record of how the desperate, starving lepers found great treasure and went and hid it (2 Kings 7:8) as the basis for His parable about the man who finds the Gospel, as the treasure in a field, and hides it. But surely He intended us to think of what those men did afterwards. “They said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace”. They even felt that woe would be unto them if they did not share the good news of what they had found. The same joyful urgency must be ours.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1.htm>

Lam 3

Paul described himself as the offscouring of all things- using the very language of condemned Israel (Lam. 3:45). He so wanted to see their salvation that he identified with them to this extent. By doing so he was reflecting in essence the way the Lord Jesus so identified Himself with us sinners, as our representative, " made sin" [whatever precisely this means] for the sake of saving us from that sin (2 Cor. 5:21). and what of our identification with the lost today, in order to save them?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-10Motivation_To_Preach.htm

1 Cor. 16

Paul reminded the Corinthians that submission should be shown to elders who have addicted themselves to serving others (1 Cor. 16:15,16)- i.e. submission arises out of our perception of an elders' spirituality, not from his mere holding of an office. Sadly, Corinth didn't stay with this advice. At the end of the first century, the first letter of Clement to Corinth ordered them to accept bishops as having a perpetual right to their office, and that the church must respect that right. And not so long after that, Cyprian was telling them that “whoever has the office receives the spiritual grace requisite for its fulfillment”- the very opposite of the idea of being spiritually qualified for a job in church! ‘We give you the job, and God will give you the spiritual qualifications for it’. That was how quickly the live, dynamic early church became institutionalized; that's how strong is our desire for structure and offices, rather than the more risky way of allowing the spirit of Christ free course. We need to identify those whom we respect in the ecclesia, and follow their example- even if they are despised by others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

September 3

2 Kings 8

The word / Gospel will inevitably have a result, and yet it is also limited by the attitudes of men. Take an example: the widow woman was told to borrow pots in which to place the oil which would be miraculously provided. The extent of the miracle was limited by the number and size of the pots she borrowed in faith. Or take 2 Kings 8:10: "Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die". Ben-Hadad *could* recover, it was possible in prospect, but God knew he would not fulfil certain preconditions, and therefore he would not.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-2limiting_god.htm

Lam 4

In the Lord's death we see the heart that bleeds, bared before our eyes in the cross. It is written of Him in His time of dying that He "poured out his soul unto death" (Is. 53:12). The Hebrew translated "poured out" means to make naked- it is rendered as "make thyself naked" in Lam. 4:21 (see too Lev. 20:18,19; Is. 3:17). The Lord's sensitivity was what led Him to His death- He made His soul naked, bare and sensitive, until the stress almost killed Him quite apart from the physical torture. To be sensitive to others makes us open and at risk ourselves. A heart that bleeds really bleeds and hurts within itself. And this was the essence of the cross. It seems to me that the Lord was crucified naked- hence those who turn away put Him to "an open [Gk. 'naked'] shame". In being sensitive to others, we make ourselves naked. The heart that bleeds is itself in great risk of hurt and pain. We have all doubtless felt a little of this when those we have done much for act unreasonably towards us, or betray us. But in the cross, this feature of human experience was taken to its utmost. The Son of God bared His soul in the naked shame of crucifixion. All that He was and stood for was displayed so openly. His mental pain was openly revealed, pain that came as a result of risking and opening up so much to us, to our humanity. And the tragedy of it all was that *at the time*, virtually nobody perceived it. As we share in His cross, as share in it we must, we can only expect to pass through those feelings of disappointment at others' ingratitude...they shouldn't lead us to give up on the work of the ecclesia, or effort with other people, or our children... but rather make us know that if we are so sharing in His suffering, we will likewise reign with Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-6heart_of_jesus.htm

2 Cor. 1, 2

The spiritual man within us in this life is still recognized by God after our death, and in the Kingdom this spiritual man will be given a glorified bodily form. Of course it is evident that we personally are not conscious after death. It is God who is conscious of us, not the other way round. In this same sense 1 Tim. 6:19 speaks of our good works being stored up until the judgment day. It was a spiritually discerning hymn writer who penned: "Those characters shall firm remain / their everlasting trust...when (all other things) have mouldered into dust". Because of this, the fact we have the spiritual man within us now is a sure guarantee that we will be in the Kingdom (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5). It is the spiritual aspect of our characters which will continue to know and relate to each other in the Kingdom age. The spiritual aspects of our friendships within the ecclesia are eternal. No wonder there is such joy of fellowship possible for us now! The closeness of spirit after a moving Bible study or exhortation, the

intense unity of fervent collective prayer, these are expressions of that interlocking of spiritual character which will continue eternally. By contrast, if our relationships are based around human similarity, these will "perish" along with the outward man. The same is true of marital and family relationships.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-2-1The_Hidden_Man.html

September 4

2 Kings 9

Elisha weeps tears over Hazael, knowing how much damage he is going to do to Israel in response to Elijah's prayer (2 Kings 8:12). Yet significantly, Elijah doesn't actually do what he is told; he doesn't anoint Jehu nor Hazael to destroy Israel (2 Kings 9:3). It's hard to decide whether this was disobedience or rather an awkward realization that he had been praying with too harsh a spirit for something that would have been best left to God. It's such a warning.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-2-1Fire_From_Heaven.htm

Lam 5

Jeremiah's prophecies of gracious restoration were known by the exiles; but many passages in Isaiah, the Psalms (e.g. Ps. 137:7-9) and Lamentations (Lam. 5:20,21) indicate that the exiles had little conviction they would be fulfilled, considering Judah as "utterly rejected" by God, and just getting on with their lives in Babylon without any real hope in God's salvation. Considering the prosperity of their lives there, this was an all too convenient conclusion for them to draw. Once again we see that false interpretation of Scripture invariably has a moral subtext to it. Is material prosperity today related to a lack of faith in the Kingdom promises?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-3Jeremiah_Restoration_Prophecies.htm

2 Cor. 3, 4

As cotton wool clouds drift lazily across the sky and life goes on in its petty routines, it is easy to miss the point that we are a planet tearing through space at a huge speed. And likewise it is difficult to appreciate the astonishing brevity of our human experience. God has existed from eternity, and the future Kingdom will exist eternally. The 6,000 years of humanity is an absolute pin prick in the spectrum of eternity. And our seventy years is even less significant. It is almost beyond belief that for the sake of our brief experience here, we have the hope of eternal existence. Our few millimetres of time here gives us the entrance to absolute eternity- if we use our brief time here aright. This is what "Redeeming the time" is all about. The relationship between infinite time and our few years of existence now is absolutely disproportionate. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works out an eternal weight of glory for us (2 Cor. 4:17). It follows from this that every moment of our lives is being intensely used by God to prepare us for the eternity ahead. It is incredible that our probation here are so short- just forty years or so after our baptisms. It would seem more appropriate if we suffered for say one million years in order to prepare us for the infinite time we will one day enjoy, in which one million years will be as a moment. The point is, a tremendous amount of spiritual development and preparation is packed in to a very very

small space of time. And from this a crucial conclusion follows: we must allow God to use every moment of our present lives as intensively as possible, to the end we might be prepared for His eternal Kingdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-3Redeeming_The_Time.htm

September 5

2 Kings 10

Time and again we are brought to realize that the same external action can be judged by God quite differently, according to our motives. Uzziah was condemned for acting as a priest; when David did the same, he was reflecting his spirituality. God commanded Jehu to perform the massacre of Ahab's family at Jezreel, and blessed him for it (2 Kings 10:10,29,30); and yet Hos. 1:4 condemns the house of Jehu for doing that. Why? Presumably because their later attitude to that act of obedience was wrong, and the act therefore became judged as God as something which brought just punishment on the house of Jehu many years later. Why? Because even an outward act of obedience, when perceived through wrong motives and feelings, becomes an act of sin and a basis even for condemnation. All our works need careful analysis once we grasp this point.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-8Genuine_Motives.htm

Ez. 1

“God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). Thus man is made in the image and likeness of God, as manifested through the angels. James 3:9 speaks of “...men, which are made in the similitude of God.” Our creation in the image of God surely means that we can infer something about the real object of which we are but an image. Thus God, whom we reflect, is not something nebulous of which we cannot conceive. Ezekiel saw God enthroned above the cherubim, with the silhouette of “the likeness of a man” (Ez. 1:26; 10:20); it is God Himself who is located above the cherubim (2 Kings 19:15 RV). All this has a practical import; because we are in the image of God, because it is imprinted on every part of our bodies, we must give that body to God, just as men were to give the penny which had Caesar’s image on it to Caesar (Lk. 20:25). Commenting on this matter in relation to Gen. 1:26,27, Risto Santala writes: “There are two Hebrew words here, *tselem*, ‘image’ (in modern Hebrew ‘photograph’), and *demuth*, ‘figure’ or ‘similitude’ ... these expressions are very concrete. God is a person and he has a definite form and being”. Do we feel this as we pray and relate to Him?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/1-2.htm>

2 Cor. 5-7

Sin has a kind of anesthesia accompanying it; the very act of sinning makes us less sensitive to sin. If we can really pray, on our knees, for forgiveness of what may appear to others (and sometimes ourselves) to be surface sins, just the inevitable outworkings of being human... then we will have a 'new life' experience. We will die to that sin, and in that death find life. We must wash ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit even after baptism (2 Cor. 7:1); by doing so, we as it were go through the death-and-resurrection process of baptism

again; we live it all once again. We must even after baptism " put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:14; Col. 3:12,14; 1 Thess. 5:8), even though *at baptism* we put on the Lord Jesus (Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:10) and in prospect the flesh was co-crucified with Christ's flesh (Rom. 6:6,18). By putting off the things of the flesh and putting on the things of the Lord in our lives, we live out the baptism principle again; and thereby we are " renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:22-24). This newness of thinking, therefore, is a result of serious self-analysis and confession. No matter what your disillusion with Christians and even yourself, whatever your sense of boredom in spiritual life: to rise up from your knees having confessed even your 'smallest' failure, really believing you are forgiven, all revved up with determination to do better... this will impart a verve and newness to life which little else can.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

September 6

2 Kings 11, 12

The house of Baal was broken down in 2 Kings 10:27. But soon afterwards, it was rebuilt and had to be destroyed yet again (2 Kings 11:18). There are examples galore of purges and re-purges in the record of the Kings. God knows that we have this terrible capacity to lose spiritual intensity. His most faithful servants have been afflicted with this problem.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

Ez. 2

Ezekiel was shown "what the house of Israel is doing in the dark" (Ez. 8:12). To pass through human life with this level of sensitivity must've been so hard. Psychologically and nervously, the stress would've been awful. It seems to me that the prophets had to be somehow psychologically strengthened by God to endure living that sensitively in this crass and unfeeling world- hence God made Ezekiel and Jeremiah as a wall and "iron pillar" to Israel, hardened their faces, so that they wouldn't be "dismayed at [the] looks" of those who watched them with anger and consternation (Jer. 1:18; 15:20; Ez. 2:4-6; 3:8,9,27). This psychological strengthening was not aimed at making them insensitive, but rather in strengthening them to live sensitively to sin in a sinful world without cracking up. And He will do the same for us, too. This psychological strengthening was absolutely necessary- for no human being can live in a constant state of inspiration without breaking. The composer Tchaikovsky commented: "If that condition of mind and soul, which we call inspiration, lasted long without intermission, no artist could survive it. The strings would break and the instruments be shattered into fragments". The whole tremendous experience of having God's mind in them, sharing His perspective, seeing the world through His eyes, made the prophets appear crazy to others. There's a marked emphasis upon the fact that they were perceived as madmen (e.g. Jer. 29:24,26; Hos. 9:7; 2 Kings 9:11). For us to walk down a street for even ten minutes, feeling and perceiving and knowing the sin of every person in those rooms and houses and yards, feeling the weeping of God over each of them... would send us crazy. And yet God strengthened the prophets, and there's no reason to think that He will not as it were strengthen us in our sensitivity too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

2 Cor. 8, 9

Paul's focus upon the positive is really tremendous, especially coming from a man so far spiritually ahead of the weak Corinthians. He commends their "readiness" to donate, whilst pointing out they are more talk than action; and later speaks to others of "*our* readiness", identifying himself with the Corinthian brethren whose lack of actual action had got him into so many problems in fulfilling what he had confidently promised on their behalf (2 Cor. 8:11,12,19). He even gloried to others of their "readiness" (2 Cor. 9:2), whilst clearly not turning a blind eye to their failure to actually produce anything concrete.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-10Paul_And_Weak_Brethren.htm

September 7

2 Kings 13

Elisha told Joash: "Thou shalt smite the Syrians... till thou hast consumed them". But Elisha then went on to lament that Joash's lack of spiritual vision would mean that he *could have* consumed them, but actually he would only win three victories over them (2 Kings 13:17-19). So the prophetic statement that Joash would "consume" the Syrians was only true potentially. And God has set up so many potentials for us today!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-2Human_Response.htm

Ez. 3

We may reason that if we fail to upbuild a brother, or preach, then God will somehow do it anyway. But this doesn't seem to be the spirit of Ez. 3:18: "When...thou givest him not warning...he shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand". Quite clearly, our efforts of on behalf of others can affect the eternal destiny of a third party.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

2 Cor. 10, 11

Paul's letters reveal the care of all the churches weighing down his soul daily, coming upon him as he woke up each morning (2 Cor. 11:28); the Paul who repeatedly encourages the weak, treating weak and strong as all the same in many ways, until he eventually attains a level of selfless devotion to his weak brethren that is only surpassed by the Lord Himself. Paul endured one of the most traumatic lives ever lived- beaten with rods, shipwrecked, sleepless, cold, naked, betrayed, robbed, beaten, and so much of this isn't recorded (e.g. the three shipwrecks and two of the beatings with rods he speaks of in 2 Cor. 11 aren't mentioned in Acts). And yet he implies that even more than all that, he felt the pressure of care for his brethren in the churches. His heart so bled for them...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-2-1paul_and_his_brethren.htm

September 8

2 Kings 14

There is a common phrase in the record of the Kings of Judah which I admit to being unable to conclusively interpret: " He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" . Many of the men of whom this was said were not very righteous, and some (e.g. Uzziah, 2 Kings 14:3) were punished for their later apostasy. Possible explanations are that they repented at the end, although unrecorded; or that they were initially righteous; or that God counted them as righteous although they did wrong things. I find problems with each of these alternatives. So I am left with the possibility that a man can *do* (and perhaps this is the word that needs emphasis) what is right in God's eyes, but still ultimately be condemned because his *heart* is far from God; which is the teaching of 1 Cor. 13; Mk. 7:6-9 and the other Scriptures considered above. Uzziah " *did* that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like (i.e. he didn't do his works like) David his father" (2 Kings 14:3) must be paralleled with 2 Chron. 25:2: " he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart" . Working for God as David did, therefore involved doing the works with a perfect heart, the open conscience which David so often displayed in the Psalms. But Amaziah was deceived by the fact he was doing good works, and the real essence of his relationship with God was thereby overlooked. And we too can project a shadow-self to others, an image of spirituality, which eventually we come to believe ourselves; when our heart is far from God. This feature of human nature explains why a man or woman can reach such heights of devotion and then turn round and walk away from it all, out into the darkness of the world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-8Genuine_Motives.htm

Ez. 4

There are concessions to our human weakness throughout Scripture, once we look for them. Ezekiel was told to bake his food with human dung in order to show the extent of uncleanness Israel would suffer. But his Levitical background made him ask for a concession here. And the Lord gave it, in telling him to use cow's dung (Ez. 4:15). God surely makes concessions to each one of us today... and so we should do to others.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

2 Cor. 12, 13

There is a fellowship of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14) in the sense that all who live the same spiritually-centred life will thereby be bound together in a powerful and inevitable fellowship. When, for example, two Christian mothers strike up conversation about the difficulty of raising children in this present evil world, when two brethren talk about the difficulties of living as Christ would in today's business world...there is, right there, in those almost casual conversations, the fellowship of the spirit. It isn't just a social connection because we belong to the same denomination.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

September 9

2 Kings 15

Living out of parental expectation when it comes to our relationship with God is a major problem for Anglo Saxon believers. Christians and parental expectation so often go together

in the Western world. And it was in the ecclesia of Israel before us. So often kings who were not very faithful or spiritual are described with a rubric like: " He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord: he did according to all that his father...had done" (e.g. 2 Kings 15:34). This may not mean that he did what was right in God's sight *full stop*. He did what was right *only insofar as his father had done*. And this is why over time, the spirituality of the kings of Judah decreased.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-3-5Christians_And_Parental_Expectation.htm

Ez. 5

Repentance, change of mind, can be hid from God's eyes (Hos. 13:14). He says in Ez. 5:11 that He will withdraw His eye, that it will not spare- when He saw the suffering of Israel at the hands of the invaders He sent (RVmg.). The idea of things being hidden from God's eyes is surely a poetic way of saying He limits His omniscience. Likewise God did not let His eye spare in punishing His people (Ez. 5:11; 9:5), after the pattern of His telling Moses to 'let me alone' that He might destroy them. It's as if God knows that He *is* emotional and is capable of being influenced by those emotions. And yet, God is so torn. He wanted to destroy them. But He wanted to save them. They were His children. And, worst of all, He " often" went through this feeling (Ps. 106:45). And we are likely tearing God today by our behaviour.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-3god_limiting_his_omniscience.htm

Lk. 1

At the shores of the Red Sea, it seems Moses' faith wavered, and he prayed something at best inappropriate. All we read is God's response: " Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Ex. 14:15). It seems that Moses' 'cry' isn't recorded- by grace. Likewise it seems Zacharias probably said far more than " Whereby shall I know this?" when Gabriel told him he would soon have a son. It would seem the conversation went on for so long that the people outside wondered why he was staying so long. Presumably he remonstrated with the Angel with other, graciously unrecorded words, and thereby earned the punishment of dumbness (Lk. 1:18-22). Are we likewise eager to cover transgression rather than gloat and gossip over it?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-3A_Good_Conscience.htm

September 10

2 Kings 16

" Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house" (2 Kings 18:15) is an exact quotation from 2 Kings 16:8, concerning Ahaz of faithless Israel doing exactly the same. " Hezekiah cut off the gold (faith) from the doors...which Hezekiah king of *Judah* had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria (2 Kings 18:16). The apparently needless repetition of the name " Hezekiah" in this verse serves to show that we are now dealing with a different spiritual man to the previous " Hezekiah king of *Judah*" , typifying, as he then did, the faithful remnant.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/8-5.htm>

Ez. 6

Truly has Ez. 6:9 prophesied of the rejected: "They shall loathe themselves for their evils which they have committed in all their abominations". Jude 15 would even suggest that the purpose of judgment being executed is to convict the rejected of *all* their ungodly deeds and hard words. Through realising their condemnation they will realize in awful detail exactly *why* this had to be. Is this really our feeling about our sins? Our own self-examination now will be stimulated by realising the depth to which we *deserve* condemnation, even though by grace we are saved rather than condemned.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_3.htm

Lk. 2

The Lord said that all those whom he finds *watching* will be welcomed into the marriage feast (Lk. 12:37). And 2 Tim. 4:8 is plain enough: "All them also that love his appearing" will be rewarded along with Paul. Paul's own confidence in salvation was because he knew the earnestness of his desire to be "present with the Lord" Jesus (2 Cor. 5:8), such was the closeness of his relationship with him. Is this really our attitude too? Can we feel like Simeon, that we are quite happy to die after we have just seen our Lord with our own eyes (Lk. 2:29)? Is there really much *love* between us and our Lord? The faithful are described as "those that *seek* (God)...such as *love* thy salvation" (Ps. 40:16). None truly seek God (Rom. 3:11- the context concerns all of us, believers and unbelievers); and yet we are those who seek Him. We must be ambitious to do the impossible. Those who truly *love* righteousness and the Kingdom will be rewarded with it. Likewise Paul in 1 Cor. 8:2,3 describes the faithful man as one who accepts he knows nothing as he ought to know, but truly loves God. Heb. 9:28 is clear: "Unto them that look for (Christ) shall he appear the second time...unto salvation". Those who truly look for Christ will be given salvation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_3.htm

September 11

2 Kings 17

There will be a certain amount of discussion between Jesus and the responsible. It would appear that the wicked will argue back in protest against their rejection at the judgment ("When saw we thee?...Thou art an hard man"), and will desperately try to find acceptance. All this has to be reconciled with the silent dejection and grim acceptance of the 'goats'. 1 Jn. 2:28 speaks of them as being "ashamed from before him at his coming", the Greek suggesting the idea of slinking away in shame, after the pattern of Israel being *carried away* into captivity (2 Kings 17:6,11,23,33- Heb. 'to denude, make naked'). Another foretaste of this was in the way the condemned world of Noah's time [the flood was a clear type of the final judgment] were to 'pine away / languish' (Gen. 6:17; 7:21- AV "die"). The wicked will melt away from the Lord's presence (Ps. 68:2). Rejected Israel are described as being "ashamed away" (Joel 1:12)- the same idea. This is the idea behind Heb. 12:15 RVmg: "...man that falleth back from the grace of God". What they did in this life in slinking away from the reality of pure grace will be what is worked out in their condemnation experience. Note that

Jesus Himself will be likewise ashamed of His unworthy followers (Lk. 9:26); there will be a mutuality in the natural distancing between the two parties. This is the scene of Rev. 16:15- the rejected being made naked in shame. This slinking back in shame will fulfil the prophecies of Is. 1:24,29 and Jer. 2:35,36, which speak of the rejected being made ashamed, becoming ashamed, of their idols. They will be made ashamed by the judgment process.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_5.htm

Ez. 7

The frequent references to Israel being removed from His sight, or eye (e.g. 2 Kings 17:23) may refer to the way that an Angel was permanently present in Israel, the land in which the Angel eyes of the Lord ran to and fro. By going into captivity, Israel were thus removed from God's Angelic 'eye'. This would explain how Israel were never out of God's sight in the sense of His awareness of them. And yet language of limitation is being used here- because the Angel dwelling in Israel no longer 'saw' the people. This idea may be behind the references to God's eye not sparing nor pitying Israel (Ez. 7:4)- when in fact God Himself did and does spare and pity Israel. The implication would then be that His grace and pity is even greater than that of His Angels- which is an encouraging thought to us here on earth who struggle to believe in the extent of God's personal grace to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels6_1.htm

Lk. 3

The message of Isaiah 40 is basically that we must be levelled or humbled one way or the other- either by our repentance and acceptance of the Gospel today, or through the experience of condemnation at the day of judgment. We're calling people to humility. And we must ask whether the content and style of our preaching really does that. But when John the Baptist quoted and preached this passage, he interpreted it beyond a call to humility. He said that in order to prepare the way of the Lord, to make a level passage for Him, the man with two coats should give to him who had none, and likewise share his food (Lk. 3:11). So the 'equality' and levelling was to be one of practical care for others. We have to ask, how often we have shared our food, clothing or money with those who don't have... for this is all part of preparing for the Lord's coming. It could even be that when there is more of what Paul calls "an equality" amongst the community of believers, that then the way of the Lord will have been prepared. And He will then return.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a5-3preaching_commission_of_isaiah_40.htm

September 12

2 Kings 18

But we are real life men and women, only too aware that although yes, we are in Christ, we are also all too human still. We still sin the sins and think the thoughts and feel the feelings of those around us. We are only who we are, born in such a town, living in such a city, doing a job, trying to provide for a family. In our minds eye we see the spotless lamb of God, moving

around Galilee 2000 years ago, doing good, preaching the Gospel, healing the sick. But He was there, and we are here now, today, in all our weakness and worldly distraction. He was as He was, but *we* are as we are. We each have two 'people' as it were within us; we act both as spiritual and as fleshly people. The record of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:16 reflects this: "At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from... pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, because of the king of Assyria". The Hezekiah who faithfully overlaid the pillars with gold was the same man, acting a different persona, who then cut it off faithlessly when under pressure. Likewise the Jews could be described as both Abraham's seed (Jn. 8:37) and not Abraham's seed (Jn. 8:39); as having Abraham as their father (Jn. 8:56), and yet also having the devil as their father (Jn. 8:39-41,44). Of course we should aim for congruence, between who we want to be and who we are, being a "united" person rather than hypocritical.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/12.htm>

Ez. 8

Reflect a while on two consecutive verses in Ez. 8:18; 9:1: "Though they [Israel] *cry in mine ears with a loud voice* [when they are under judgment for their actions, which I now ask them to repent of], yet will I not hear them. He [God] *cried also in mine* [Ezekiel's] *ears with a loud voice*, saying...". Do you see the connection? As we read and hear God's word today, He is passionately crying in our ears with a loud voice. Just imagine someone literally doing this to you! If we refuse to hear it, then we will cry in *His* ears with a loud voice in the last and final day of condemnation. The intensity of *His* appeal to us now will be the intensity with which the rejected plead for Him to change His verdict upon them; and God, like them in this life, will refuse to hear. What arises from this is a simple fact: as we read and hear the pages of Scripture, as we turn the leaves in our Bibles, God is crying in our ears with a loud voice. Our response to Him is a foretaste of our acceptance or rejection at the day of judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

Lk. 4

"The word was made flesh" in daily reality for Jesus. The extraordinary connection between the man Jesus and the word of God which He preached and spoke is perhaps reflected in Lk. 4:20: "He closed the book [of the words of God], and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him". Here we have as it were an exquisite close up of Jesus, His very body movements, His handling of the scroll, and the movement of the congregations eyes. Notice that at this stage He had only read from the scroll, and not yet begun His exposition of what He had read. The impression I take from this is that there was an uncanny connection between Him and the word of His Father. The Son reading His Father's word, with a personality totally in conformity to it, must have been quite something to behold. He was the word of God made flesh in a person, in a way no other person had or could ever be. Thus He was indeed "The word was made flesh". The idea of words becoming flesh is a reflection of the Hebrew idea that a person's words become their actions. Thus we read of Solomon's "acts" or, RVmg., "sayings" (2 Chron. 9:5). There is no requirement for a person to exist in one form and then turn into another form. There was perfect congruence between the personality of Jesus, and the words of God which He preached. Thus the people marvelled at Him, commenting "What is this word?" (Lk. 4:36 RV). God's word was made flesh, was made personal, in Him. In this sense there was almost

no need for Jesus to say specific words about Himself- His character and personality showed forth that word, that *logos*, that essential message. The Jews pressured Him: "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly". But He could respond: "I told you, and you believe not: the works that I do... these bear witness of me" (Jn. 10:24,25). Of course, they'd have complained that He had *not* told them in so many words. His comment was that His "works", His life, His being, showed plainly who He was, His personality was "the [plain] word" which they were demanding. He was the word made flesh in totality and to perfection. And the word is to be made flesh in us as it was in Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/1-3-3the_word_was_made_flesh.htm

September 13

2 Kings 19

Hezekiah put the situation before God in prayer when he was surrounded by the Assyrians, and asked for deliverance from them. But God saw his prayer and attitude in quite a different light: "The virgin the daughter of Zion (Hezekiah and the faithful remnant in Jerusalem) hath despised thee, and laughed thee (Sennacherib) to scorn...shaken her head at thee" (2 Kings 19:21). Hezekiah's desperate plea for deliverance ("O Lord I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand") was seen as a confident shaking of his head at Sennacherib. God sees our prayers very differently to how we do. Hezekiah simply put the situation before God: "Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear [the reproach]; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see" (Is. 37:17); and yet this was understood as him praying to God against Sennacherib (Is. 37:21). Hezekiah encouraged Isaiah to pray, because "The Lord they God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh...to reproach the living God...wherefore lift up *thy* prayer..." (2 Kings 19:3,4). Isaiah's words of prayer would be parallel with the words of Rabshakeh's words; and God would surely hear Rabshakeh's words and count them as a prayer to Him to do something. He would count the situation as the prayer, and Isaiah's praying was to be in harmony with this. That attitudes are read as prayers is reflected in the way that Rabshakeh's arrogance against Yahweh is described as him lifting up his eyes against God (2 Kings 19:22). By contrast, Hezekiah prayed at the same time: "Unto you do I lift up my eyes" (Ps. 123:1). 'Lifting up eyes' is therefore an idiom for prayer. Rabshakeh didn't consciously pray blasphemous words to God, but his attitude was counted as a prayer. Also in a Hezekiah context, we read of how his own heart was arrogantly 'lifted up' to God (2 Chron. 32:25,26 cp. his repentance for having a lifted up heart in Ps. 131:1). He made the same mistake as his opponent Rabshakeh- a lifted up heart was read by God as a heart / mind / eyes lifted up against Him. He noticed the attitude of heart in a man as a 'lifted up' to Him prayer.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Ez. 9

Something happens and is achieved when we preach God's word. The same idiom occurs in Ez. 9:11 AVmg., where we read that "the man clothed with linen"- representing Ezekiel or his representative Angel- "returned the word, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me". The word 'returned' in the sense that someone, somewhere, was obedient to it even if others weren't. The word of God will produce converts in some sense; it will not return void (Is. 55:11). The apparent dearth of response to some preaching therefore poses a challenging

question. Are we preaching the word of God alone, or our own ideas? Does God withhold blessing for some reason unknown to us?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/7.htm>

Lk. 5

The Acts record repeatedly describes the converts as "the multitude of the disciples" (2:6; 4:32; 5:14,16; 6:2,5; 12:1,4; 15:12,30; 17:4; 19:9; 21:22), using the same word to describe the "multitude of the disciples" who followed the Lord during His ministry (Lk. 5:6; 19:37). There is no doubt that Luke intends us to see all converts as essentially continuing the witness of those men who walked around Palestine with the Lord between AD30 and AD33, stumbling and struggling through all their misunderstandings and pettiness, the ease with which they were distracted from the essential...to be workers together with Him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-24.htm>

September 14

2 Kings 20

"I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears" (2 Kings 20:5) parallels Hezekiah's tears with his words. God interpreted his tears as a prayer. Hezekiah has earlier requested for God to both hear and see the words of Sennacherib (19:26), as if these too were to be read as a prayer for Divine intervention.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Ez. 10

The Lord taught His followers "first", or "most of all", to beware of hypocrisy (Lk. 12:1). For us, all the world is *not* to be a stage, and we are *not* to be merely actors upon that stage. Hypocrisy is that living out of a persona, acting, rather than being the person God created us to be. In the Lord Jesus men saw the word made flesh (Jn. 1:14). There was perfect congruence between the person He presented Himself as, and the person He essentially was. This was why He could so easily touch the true person in others. And I think this is the meaning of the otherwise enigmatic insistence that the Cherubim's faces, their appearances, and "themselves" were all one (Ez. 10:22). The Russian [Synodal] version translates this: "Their view, was who they themselves were".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-1the_real_self.htm

Lk. 6

Either we will mourn now in repentance (Lk. 6:25; the Greek for "mourn" is often in a repentance context), or we will mourn at the judgment (Mt. 8:12 etc.). Having foretold the inevitable coming of judgment day, Yahweh Himself pleads with Israel: "Therefore also *now*...turn ye even to me...with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). There's a great logic here for us to repent today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-9The_Logic_Of_Endurance.htm

September 15

2 Kings 21

God's Name was called upon us at baptism into the Name. This bearing of His Name means that the principles of that Name bear rule over us in our lives: " We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; thy name was not called upon them" (Is. 63:19 AV mg.). The Name *is* called upon us; and therefore and thereby we are Yahweh's servants, dominated by His principles and character. Because the Name was called upon the temple, therefore it was simply impossible that those who realized this could worship idols in it (2 Kings 21:4,7); whatever has God's Name called upon it, whatever bears His image, must be devoted to Him alone. The Lord pointed out that this applies to our very bodies, which being in God's image should be given over to Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Ez. 11

"I will judge [condemn] you...and ye shall know that I am the LORD", Ezekiel often warned (e.g. Ez. 11:9). Men must either know Yahweh now, or they will know Him in condemnation. And Ezekiel uses the idea of 'knowing' Yahweh in the sense of the knowledge that leads to a desire for responsive action. But Ezekiel plays on this logic even further; because Israel had not "executed my judgments", therefore in their condemnation Yahweh would "execute judgments among you" (Ez. 11:9,12). We cannot escape the moral requirements of Yahweh; if *now* we ignore the cutting of the flesh which they demand, then in the day of condemnation those judgments we have neglected to execute will be executed in us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_6.htm

Lk. 7

He who is forgiven much, the same will love much (Lk. 7:41-50). The purpose of the Lord's mini-parable was not that the druggies, the hookers, the murderers will love Christ more than you or me. It was to teach that according to a man's *perception* of his sin, so he will love his Lord. All too often we serve Him because we have a conscience that we should do so; and yet the service He requires is service, even the senseless service of that forgiven woman with her precious ointment, simply because we *love* Him. And that overwhelming, overflowing *love* will only come from a true sense of our desperation. By knowing our desperation, we will know the Lord, we will know the grace and fathomless mercy which is so essentially *Him*: " Ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you...not according to your wicked ways" (Ez. 20:43,44).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-5Our_Desperation.htm

September 16

2 Kings 22, 23

Josiah sorrowed for Israel's sins, and God interpreted this as if Josiah was praying for the deferring of God's judgments, even though Josiah fully expected the judgments to come in his time (2 Kings 22:19). Our feelings are interpreted by God as prayer- sure comfort for those times we just feel unable to pray, but feel still with the Lord.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Ez. 12

The Hebrew word *ulay*, 'perhaps', is significant. "Perhaps they will understand", God says, in reflection upon Ezekiel's preaching ministry to God's people (Ez. 12:1-3). Of Jeremiah's prophetic work, God likewise comments: "It may be [Heb. *ulay*] they will listen" (Jer. 26:2,3; Jer. 36:3,7; Jer. 51:8; Is. 47:12). This uncertainty of God as to how His people will respond to His word reflects the degree to which He has accommodated Himself to our kind of time. It has huge implications for us, too. With what eagerness must God Almighty look upon us as we sit down to read His word daily! 'Are they going to listen? How are they going to respond?'

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Lk. 8

There was perfect congruence between what Jesus said and what He did. Perhaps this was why He told the parents of the girl whom He resurrected "to tell no man what was done" (Lk. 8:56), even though it was so obvious; He wanted His self-evident works to speak for themselves, without the need for human words. For His works were essentially His message. Our witness in this world can likewise at times be without specific words.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/1-3-3the_word_was_made_flesh.htm

September 17

2 Kings 24, 25

We can't be brethren in Christ who have no effect on the rest of the body. We all have an influence on others. Our behaviour, however passive, has a powerful effect on our brethren. We are all members of one body. Job pointed out that the words of another can assuage grief in a way that ones' own self-talk simply cannot (Job 16:5,6). On the contrary, a whole community can be cursed for the sake of one man's sin, even if he later repents (2 Kings 24:3,4). The fact we can be guilty of causing others to stumble means that we can limit God's gracious plan for them. By refusing to preach to the Gentiles, Peter was 'making common' what God had potentially cleansed (Acts 10:15 RV). We can spiritually *destroy* our brother, for whom Christ died (Rom. 14:15); we can undo the work of the cross for a brother who would otherwise be saved by it. We can make others sin (Ex. 23:33; 1 Sam. 2:24; 1 Kings 16:19). There is an urgent imperative here, to really watch our behaviour; e.g. to not drink alcohol in the presence of a brother whose conscience is weak.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

Ez. 13

God is so so sensitive to prayerfulness. He condemns the leaders of Israel: " You have not gone up to the breaks in the wall to repair it for the house of Israel [an idiom for interceding with God in behalf of Israel- Ez. 2:30,31] so that it will stand firm" (Ez. 13:5). If only there had been a prayerful minority, God would have changed the whole course of His dealings with Israel. But petty materialism and self-mindedness was what stopped those leaders from doing their job. God repeatedly stated that He would not spare /pity Israel in judging them (Ez. 5:11; 7:4,9; 8:18; 9:5 etc.). But Joel 2:17 exhorts the priests to beg God in prayer to "spare" [s.w.] His people during the invasion Ezekiel had prophesied. God is so sensitive to prayer that He will even change His stated purpose.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-3prayer_for_others.htm

Lk. 9

The characters in human novels / accounts / biographies are as nothing compared to the immense stature which is given to the man Jesus in the crucifixion accounts, let alone to the central role of the crucifixion in the Gospel records. Somehow those records urgently transmit to us the essence of His personality. Without effort, without self-assertion, almost without direct claim, we are left awed with the reality that this man, through his death, demands my total response. All the Gospels present the crucifixion and resurrection as the climax of their presentation of the Gospel. Luke's record is studded with references to the Lord's progress on that final journey up to Jerusalem; events took place "as they went in the way" (Lk. 9:57-62), as if they were incidental to the main aim of the record, which was to describe the final coming of the Lord to Jerusalem and death (Lk. 13:22). It has been observed, truly enough: "Of the biographies I have read, few devote more than ten percent of their pages to the subject's death- including biographies of men like Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, who died violent and politically significant deaths. The Gospels, though, devote nearly a third of their length to the climactic last week of Jesus' life". "The cross is central in the structure of all four Gospels. They have well been described as 'Passion narratives with extended introductions'. They are not biographies. In each one the death and resurrection of Jesus take up such a disproportionate amount of space that it is quite clear that the author has no intention of giving an account of the life of our Lord. Everything is arranged to lead up to the climax- the cross". It is a quite mistaken view of the teaching of the Lord Jesus that it centred around brotherly love and the sermon on the mount. His most oft repeated image and demand was to carry His cross. Is this the place we give His cross in our thinking today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/2Central_Role_Crucifixion_Gospels.htm

September 18

1 Chron. 1

These records seem to stress the weakness and occasional strength of these children of God. This is one of the major lessons from Chronicles. Every now and then, the list of names is interrupted by a piece of information which indicates God's awareness of their spirituality. For example, the fact some men had more than one wife or a wife from a nation other than Israel is often recorded (1 Chron. 1:32; 2:3,26,35,48; 4:18; 5:1; 7:14; 8:8). The way these interruptions occur in the lists of names stands out. This is surely to indicate two things: that

many faithful men (e.g. Abraham and Caleb, 1 Chron. 1:32; 2:46) made mistakes in this area of life, and secondly that all down the centuries God has not forgotten that they married out of the faith, or that they allowed the pressures of their surrounding world to influence them to break away from the ideal one man: one woman standard of Eden. These two facts provide us with both warning and comfort, in that although God is sensitive to failure, He is still able to justify men, to count them as if they are righteous for the sake of their covenant relationship with Him, even though (e.g.) their married life was not completely in order.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-8-2Lessons_From_Chronicles_Genealogies.htm

Ez. 14

Ez. 14:14,18 imply Noah, Daniel and Job could have delivered Israel up to a certain point, but they were *so* hardened in sin at Ezekiel's time that even those men wouldn't have saved a nation which otherwise, for a lower level of sin as it were, they could otherwise have saved. If we have any grain of love in us, we will likewise dedicate ourselves to fervent prayer for our brethren, seeing it does have effect and validity within certain boundaries.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

Lk. 10

The disciples were to go on their preaching mission without pausing to greet others, such was their haste (Lk. 10:4 cp. 2 Kings 4:29). The Greek word translated 'greet' also carries the idea of joining together with others. People rarely travelled alone unless they were in great haste, but rather moved in caravans. But for the Lord's messengers, there was to be no loss of time. Every minute was to be precious. In a world full of time wasting distractions, information we don't need to know... this is all so necessary. No wonder that when those men finally came to themselves, realized their calling, and hurled themselves in joy at this world after the Lord's ascension... they preached repentance, immediate conversion and quick baptism, right up front. We need this spirit in our witness today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/20-3urgent_response_to_the_gospel.htm

September 19

1 Chron. 2

Occasionally we learn background information which sheds new light on the historical records. For example, David several times laments the hardness of heart to be seen in " the sons of Zeruiah" . I assumed that Zeruiah was a man- until considering 1 Chron.2:16, which says that Zeruiah was a sister of David. The fact that the hardness of those three men seems to be associated with their mother would lead us to conclude that David's sister Zeruiah was an extremely hard woman. Inevitably there must have been strands of hardness in David too (consider his treatment of Uriah, his intended massacre of Nabal's encampment, torturing the Ammonites etc.); and yet more often than not, we get the impression that David was a real softy. His experience of life made him progressively more soft, whilst his sister and nephews went the other way. Truly could he comment towards the end of it all: " Thy gentleness hath made me great" . By way of exhortation we need to soberly consider the fact that we are either getting harder, or softer. There is no in between status. The softness and gentleness of the Lord Jesus, the great antitype of David, mixed as it was with that firmness of resolve and

purpose (remember how He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem!) is surely something to really appreciate about Him, something to rise up to, to be truly inspired by.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-8-2Lessons_From_Chronicles_Genealogies.htm

Ez. 15

Judah in Babylon were as captives in the prison cell, waiting to be released and return to their land, according to Isaiah's images. And these pictures are picked up and applied to all who know the redemption and restoration of Christ. There in Babylon they were as the vine tree, burned up and fit for no work; and yet, still used to perform God's work, by grace alone (Ez. 15:5). And these men were truly types of us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-11The_Returned_Exiles.htm

Lk. 11

Quite simply, we have to believe that prayer changes things. God can change the course of a nation's destiny, or even in a sense the whole course of the universe, because some finite, ignorant, sinful human being has the neck to fervently ask Him to. We are encouraged by the Lord to persist in prayer (Lk. 11:5-13). Elijah had to pray for rain seven times before the cloud came. Daniel prayed 21 days before an answer came. Why doesn't God answer immediately? Is it not simply because He sees it is for our good to develop this habit of knocking on Heaven's door with the same same request? And I ask: do we really persevere in prayer?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-4prayer_changes_things.htm

September 20

1 Chron. 3

Solomon wished to imitate his father David in every sense; his own real personality only really came out in the Ecclesiastes years, when he took to drink, materialism, women and idolatry. It took the influence of his parents many years to wear off. David had weaknesses for horses (2 Sam. 8:4) and many wives; and Solomon followed in these steps too. Note that David had six sons in seven years by six different women, including Gentiles (1 Chron. 3:3). And in addition to these, David had children by "the concubines" (1 Chron. 3:9). Doubtless Solomon reasoned, albeit deep within his psyche, that such behaviour was legitimate because David his father had done it. We have seen that David seems to have over interpreted Scripture and assumed that his interpretation was certainly correct. And Solomon did exactly the same. The weaknesses of the parents all too easily are repeated by the children to an even greater extent.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-4-2Solomon_And_David.htm

Ez. 16

The metaphors used to describe the anger of God with Israel are pretty awful. Her children to be slain with thirst, she was to be stripped naked by her husband (Hosea 2), gang raped by her lovers, having her nose cut off and left a battered, bleeding mess in the scrubland (Ez. 16:23), to have her skirt pulled up over her head and her nakedness revealed (Jer. 13:20-27), wishing to pluck off her own breasts for shame (Ez. 23:34). Jerusalem is to be raped, violated and humiliated, according to Ezekiel. Indeed, Ezekiel's images verge at times on what some would consider pornographic. He speaks of the woman Israel's pubic hair, breasts, menstrual cycle (Ez. 16:7,10); the gang rape by her enemies which God would bring about, leaving her mutilated and humiliated (Ez. 16:37; 23:22-49); about the size of her lovers' sexual organs and coital emissions, and how she let them fondle her breasts (Ez. 23:8,20). This is shocking language, which perhaps we skip over in our Bible reading from sheer embarrassment- and we are 21st century readers brutalized by exposure to this kind of stuff in the media. For early Israel, it would all have been even more shocking. It all seemed out of proportion to having 'merely' made a few political alliances with Egypt and Assyria. Was that really like a wife letting other men fondle her breasts and have sex with her, admiring their bodies as she did so? Did it all have to end in such brutality and vulgarity? Today, sex and violence are what attract attention. From lyrics of songs to advertising and movies, that's clear enough. And the prophets are using the same tactics to arrest Israel's attention, all the more so because nudity and sex were things simply not up for public discussion. There's an anxiety which any talk about sex seems to arouse in us, and it was the prophets' intention to make us likewise get on the edge of our seats, anxious, rapt, sensitive for the next word... realizing that really and truly, this is what human sin does to God. The outrageous sex talk was to bring out how outrageous and obscene are our sins and unfaithfulness to the covenant we cut with God in baptism.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-2.htm>

Lk. 12

The rejected will experience "shame and everlasting contempt" at the judgment (Dan. 12:2). Shame and contempt must be in the eyes of others- i.e. the group of 'sheep'? Likewise the words we speak about others in secret will *then* be spoken for all to hear; and therefore we should be open in our words now, without hypocrisy (Lk. 12:1-3). The RVmg. of Lk. 12:1 makes this warning even more urgent: "First of all beware ye of...hypocrisy". It really is a major feature of the sinful nature which should be watched out for.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_4_1.htm

September 21

1 Chron. 4

1 Chron. 4:10 gives an example of this using of previous Angelic promises and preparatory work in order to achieve an act of faith. Some of the children of Judah later requested that their border be enlarged, at the expense of driving out neighbouring Canaanite tribes. "Jabez called on the God of Israel (an Angelic term), saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed (a reference back to the Angelic blessing of Abraham's seed with the promise of possession of the land?), and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand (an Angelic phrase) might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted

him that which he requested. " In passing, is this the basis of "deliver us from evil... (i e.) lead us not into (spiritual) temptation" in the Lord's prayer? In that case our sins are being likened to the tribes which Jabez drove out in faith, and we should believe that our Angel has driven our sins out for us in prospect, so that we might inherit the promises.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels6.htm>

Ez. 17

The humility of Mary was the pattern for the Lord's self-humiliation in the cross. Here above all we see the influence of Mary upon Jesus, an influence that would lead Him to and through the cross. Her idea of putting down the high and exalting the lowly (Lk. 1:52) is picking up Ez. 17:24: "I have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish". And yet these very words of Ezekiel were quoted by the Lord in His time of dying. With reverence, we can follow where we are being led in our exploration and knowing of the mind of Christ. His dear mum had gone around the house singing her Magnificat. He realized that she felt the lowly who had been exalted [and perhaps in some unrecorded incident before her conception she had been recently humbled?]. And Jesus had realized her quotation of Ez. 17:24. And He had perceived His linkage and connection with her, and how she saw all that was true of Him as in some way true of her, and vice versa. And now, in His final crisis, He takes comfort from the fact that like His dear mother, He the one who was now humbled, would be exalted. How many other trains of thought have been sparked in men's minds by the childhood instructions of their mothers...?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

Lk. 13, 14

"God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" in His mind (Ps. 75:7)- although the final putting down and setting up will be at the judgment seat (the basis for the parable of the man being asked to go up higher, Lk. 14:10). This same parable is also rooted in Prov. 25:7: "Put not forth thyself in *the presence* of the king, for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither: than that thou shouldest be put lower in *the presence* of the prince". We are in the King's presence both in this life- when we chose where to sit- just as much as when He returns and re-arranges the seating. The day of the Lord is coming, but it is even now (Mic. 7:4 Heb.). We need to live today as if we stand before the judgment of God- for "we make the answer now".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

September 22

1 Chron. 5

Consider the background to 'Gog' given in 1 Chron. 5- he was an apostate Jew who went away from the God of Israel, attracted by the grazing grounds to the north east of Israel, and who eventually ended up living permanently in the land of Israel's enemies, the land of the Hagarenes (sons of Hagar, i.e. the Arabs) and Assyria. By seeking material things we are led away from God and His people. The Gog of Ez. 38 may well be an apostate Jew (after the pattern of Rabshakeh) who leads an invasion of his ancient homeland. He attacks because he

loves cattle (Ez. 38:11,12)- which was a characteristic of the Gog of 1 Chron. 5. Is it significant that most Russian leaders have been Jews?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-8-2Lessons_From_Chronicles_Genealogies.htm

Ez. 18

"If the wicked (wicked responsible, in the Israel context) will turn from all his sins...all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in (as a result of) his righteousness (good deeds) that he hath done he shall live (eternally)" (Ez. 18:21,22). This implies that there will be a mentioning (the Hebrew word means just that) of the man's sins to him at judgment, unless he repents. The rest of Ez. 18 and Ez. 33 show that the reverse is also true- if a man turns away from God, then all his previous good deeds which would have been mentioned to him at judgment will be 'forgotten'. In some form, it seems there will be a 'going through' of our lives at judgment day. This should influence our lives today!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_4.htm

Lk. 15

The Lord Jesus purposefully inverted the common assumption that the duty of a righteous man was to condemn the sinners. When He said that there is much joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents (Lk. 15:10), the Lord was purposefully inverting the common contemporary Jewish saying that there was much joy in Heaven whenever one sinner is destroyed in judgment. His desire is to seek to save rather than to destroy. And Elijah had not attained to this spirit of Christ when he called fire down from Heaven. Do we today rejoice to show mercy, grace and kindness, rather than condemnation and criticism of others?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-2-1Fire_From_Heaven.htm

September 23

1 Chron. 6

The Levites were to teach Judah and to make others *discern* between good and evil (Ezekiel 44:23). The sons of Zadok were chosen because they had been faithful previously. They should have done this, but instead "ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi" (Mal. 2:7,8). The sons of Zadok were descendants of Eleazer and Phinehas (1 Chron. 6:3-8), and Mal. 2:5 alludes to this: "My covenant was with him of life and peace: and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name" (cp. Ex. 32:28). But Mal. 2:6-8 go on to show that the sons of Zadok, as the descendants of Phinehas, had not lived up to their pedigree; they were making men "stumble at the law". This shows the connection between the Ezekiel prophecies and Malachi's commentary on their failed fulfilment in the hands of men like the sons of Zadok. Are we living up to what we are capable of...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_Of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

Ez. 19

The judgments upon God's people in Ez. 19:12 are in fact the same judgments given to Babylon / Assyria in Jer. 12:14. This continues a theme that the wicked amongst God's people will perish with, and perhaps during, the punishment upon the world around them. If we're not separate from this world, we will perish in its judgment.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/8-1.htm>

Lk. 16

The parable of the unjust steward must be read in the context of the preceding parables of forgiveness. The man is in debt to his Master, surely speaking of our sinfulness (Lk. 16:3,4 cp. Mt. 18:24). He has wasted his goods- which are given to us at baptism (Lk. 16:1 cp. Mt. 25:14). He *could have* begged, but he was too proud. Therefore *in order to get forgiveness* he raced round forgiving everybody else. This suggests a spiritual selfishness which surely isn't ideal. And yet " the Lord commended the unjust steward" .

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-2Jesus_Who_Understands_Human_Weakness.htm

September 24

1 Chron. 7

There's a big contrast between the Biblical record, and contemporary views of women. The male authors (under inspiration) record the achievements of women like Sherah, who built Beth-Horon (1 Chron. 7:24). The Bible isn't ultimately a sexist document- God takes notice of all His children, and His recorded word reflects this.

Ez. 20

God said He would destroy Israel in Egypt (Ez.. 20:8). But He didn't. God said He would destroy Israel in Egypt (Ez.. 20:8). But He didn't. God swore that He would destroy Israel in the wilderness (Ez. 20:21). God 'withdrew His hand', He took back this promise (Ez. 20:22). These apparent contradictions show how God's love and grace towards His people defies even His own stated purpose; the love of God cannot be presented to us without the use of contradiction and paradox. We as human beings simply lack the paradigms to handle the love of God for us. Therefore there have to be Bible paradoxes.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3Bible_Paradoxes.htm

Lk. 17

Our experience of answered prayer becomes increasingly positive, reinforcing our faith in Him and our attention to prayerfulness. And this dovetails with our increasingly sensitive reading of His word daily. The Lord intended that we should all pray the prayer of command as Elijah did; for He taught that with faith, we should be able to tell a sycamore tree to be rooted up and planted in the sea (Lk. 17:6). He doesn't advise that we pray to the Father that the tree, according to His will, be rooted up and transplanted. He wants us to come to so know the will of the Father that we can pray the prayer of direct command. And this is quite some challenge.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-1Elijah_And_prayer.htm

September 25

1 Chron. 8

When a passage is repeated twice, surely God wishes us to perceive something. 1 Chron. 8:30-34 is repeated in 9:36-40. The reason seems to be that the name 'Baal' was used by the leaders of Israel. Gibeon's children included Kish and *Baal*, Kish's son was king Saul, Saul had a son called *Eshbaal* as well as Jonathan, David's beloved friend; and Jonathan had a son called *Meribbaal*. These are not the names as recorded elsewhere; evidently the Chronicles record is highlighting the fact that there was a strand of weakness for idols in the family of Saul, including in Jonathan- who was a type of us in his friendship of David / Jesus. Surely this helps us to better relate to him; his love of David, his appreciation of David's righteousness, his belief that David would have the future Kingdom, struggled against the fact that the worldly influence of his father and great-grandfather still rubbed off upon him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-8-2Lessons_From_Chronicles_Genealogies.htm

Ez. 21

God said He would "cut off from [Jerusalem] the righteous and the wicked" (Ez. 21:3). Yet Abraham had observed that it was "far" from God to do such a thing. Surely the point of this language was to send the mind of the Biblically-aware back to Sodom, and to realize that therefore this was *not* what God wanted to do, and fervent prayer after the pattern of Abraham's *could* save the city. How much is possible, *if* we pray... but doesn't happen, because we don't?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

Lk. 18

"Nevertheless", despite the fact God answers prayer, "when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith?" (Lk. 18:8). The implication is that the experience of answered prayer *ought* to develop faith, but such will be the spiritual perils of the last days and the lack of serious prayer, that there may well be no faith in the final generation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

September 26

1 Chron. 9

In a sense God requires not help from man; and yet in another sense He has delegated His work to us, and limits His achievements according to what we are willing to do. C.S. Lewis in *The World's Last Night* observes: "He seems to do nothing of Himself which He can possibly delegate to His creatures. He commands us to do slowly and blunderingly what He could do perfectly and in the twinkling of an eye. Creation seems to be delegation through

and through. I suppose this is because He is a giver". As any employer soon learns, delegation is a risk. We have been "entrusted with the Gospel" (Tit. 1:3 RV); and therefore the world God so wants to love, the world God is appealing to, may never see Him; for He makes His appeal through us, as Paul told the Corinthians. Those who did God's work in the Old Testament temple were similarly given a "trust", they were entrusted with God's work (1 Chron. 9:22 RVmg.). Frederick Buechner remarked upon this "folly of preaching": "to choose for his holy work in the world...lamebrains and misfits and nitpickers and holier-than-thous and stuffed shirts and odd ducks and egomaniacs...". Yet weak Israel are described as God's "strength", the channel through which His strength would be shown to the nations; and they failed Him (Ps. 78:61). Frequently missionary brethren lament such attitudes in the committee brethren who control their resources. But the point is, that we are all like this. And God has chosen to work through the likes of us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-2limiting_god.htm

Ez. 22

God's Word is spoken of as if it is God Himself. The devotional point to note from this is that through God's word being in our heart, God can come so close to us. God spoke of how Israel "profaned" the command to keep the Sabbath, and then of how they profaned *Him* (Ez. 22:26). He is His word, and to despise His commands is to despise Him. Our attitude to His word is our attitude to Him. Thus Saul sinned "against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not" (1 Chron. 10:13).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bb/7-4.htm>

Lk. 19

According to Lk. 19:23, the Lord will shew the unworthy how they could have entered the Kingdom. This is after the pattern of rejected Adam and Eve having the way to the tree of life clearly shown to them after their rejection (Gen. 3:23,24). Again, notice how the judgment is for the education of those judged and those who witness it. He will shew them how they should have given their talent, the basic Gospel, to others, and therefore gained some interest. This has to be connected with the well known prohibition on lending money to fellow Israelites for usury; usury could only be received from Gentiles (Dt. 23:20). Surely the Lord is implying that *at the least* this person could have shared the Gospel with others, especially (in a Jewish context) the Gentile world. This would have at least brought some usury for the Lord. This would suggest that issues such as apathy in preaching, especially the unwillingness of the Jewish believers to share their hope with the Gentiles, will be raised by the Lord during the judgment process. Of course, the Lord hadn't told the servant (in the story) to lend the money to Gentiles; he was expected to use his initiative. The overall picture of the story is that *at least the man should have done something!*

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_4.htm

September 27

1 Chron. 10

We need to realize that we have more influence upon others than we may think. It can be that an illiterate sister in a male dominated society can think that her attendance at ecclesial meetings cannot encourage anyone. It can be that the Christian stockbroker feels that it is impossible for him to influence those he works with. But we do have influence. Consider how Saul's armour bearer would not kill him when he was mortally wounded (1 Chron. 10:4). Although he was one of Saul's men, in the anti-David camp, yet David's example of not killing Saul must have deeply influenced him. We do make a difference. We have become so humiliated by a shame based society that we can underestimate the value and power of our own personhood.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

Ez. 23

Ezekiel speaks of how every act of idolatry was seen by God as the fickle wife of a faithful husband deceitfully liaising with another, worthless, man. And there is a similar shocking terror associated with our infidelities to the Lord who bought us for His own. The self-hatred of repentant Israel before they accept the new covenant is described with a purposefully terrible idiom: *a woman plucking off her own breasts* (Ez. 23:34). These words must be seen in the context of Israel offering these parts of her body to the hands of the Gentiles (Ez. 23:3,8). And now, with her own hands, Israel would fain pluck off her breasts in realization of her degradation. This self-loathing must be part of every true repentance; for we too, in advance of Israel, ought to have repented a like repentance, and entered the very same covenant. Just reflect upon the self-loathing in repentance of Ez. 6:9; 20:43; Job 40:4; 42:6. This is how sin is serious.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-2Sin_Is_Serious.htm

Lk. 20

God sent His Son to Israel, thinking " they will reverence him when they see him" (Lk. 20:13). But Isaiah 53 had prophesied that when Israel saw Him, they would see no beauty in Him and crucify Him. Yet God restrained that knowledge, in His love and positive hope for His people. Likewise Jesus, it seems to me limited His foreknowledge of Judas. He knew from the beginning who would betray him. One of the 12 was a traitor. Yet Judas was His own familiar friend in whom He trusted. Today in our lives, it seems God allows His omniscience to be limited in order to feel with us through each of our temptations, each possibility we have, and actively feels hurt or surprise or disappointment or joy according to our response.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-3god_limiting_his_omniscience.htm

September 28

1 Chron. 11

Benaiah killed a lion in order to prepare him for killing two lionlike men (1 Chron. 11:22). God gives us experiences in order to prepare us for similar ones later on, and leads us along a

path of development. Today, therefore, is not wasted, God isn't ignorant of us, He is leading us, somehow, onwards.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/5-2-1Repetition_In_Biblical_Narratives.htm

Ez. 24

‘The prophets’ were painted by Judaism rather like the Orthodox church paints ‘the saints’ today- white faced men of such spirituality that they are to be revered and worshipped as icons, rather than seen as real examples to us today. The Lord by contrast saw them as working models of the sort of spiritual life and walk with God which we too can just as realistically attain to. In Ez. 24:13-24, God forbade Ezekiel to carry out the mourning rituals associated with his wife’s funeral. Likewise Jeremiah was forbidden to participate in lamentation for the dead in a house of mourning (Jer. 16:5-7). And again, the man who was bidden “let the dead bury their dead” was being invited to see himself on that level, of an Ezekiel or Jeremiah, being called to this behaviour by a person who could speak directly on God’s behalf. And why were those prophets bidden do those things? It was in order to be a witness to Israel, proclaiming judgment to come. And this was exactly the same reason the Lord bid His potential follower to ‘let the dead bury the dead’ - in order that the man could urgently proclaim the Gospel to Israel. Yet if we press further with the question as to *why* exactly God wanted Jeremiah and Ezekiel to not mourn for the dead, we find ourselves reflecting that actually, quite often God asked His prophets to engage in what some would call anti-social behaviour in order to attract attention to the message they were preaching. Remember that Jeremiah was forbidden to marry [most unusual for a Jew], go weddings etc. (Jer. 16:1-4,8). For other examples of ‘anti-social behaviour’ demanded of the prophets [e.g. walking about naked], see Ez. 4:9-15; 12:1-7; Hos. 1:2; Is. 20:1-6. When we meet the enigmatic phrase “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10), I believe it’s a pithy summation of what we’re saying here. The Angel had made prophecies, and John felt that this was something so wonderful that it separated him from the Angel. But John like us was bearing “the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 1:9). The same essential spirit which was in the prophets is in all those who in *their* spirit or attitude bear the witness of Jesus. Hence the prophesying Angel encourages John not to worship him, but rather to recognize that he is John’s “fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book”, i.e. all believers (Rev. 22:9). And again, this was radical stuff for the initial audience of the Apocalypse. They were being told that they had the prophets as their brethren, and on account of their spirit / attitude of bearing the testimony of Jesus, the same spirit which was in the prophets was in them. The very act of bearing witness to Jesus in our spirit / disposition is in fact to have the same spirit in us which was in the prophets and was the basis of their prophetic witness. This makes the prophets our “brethren”, not distant white faced ‘saints’.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-13.htm>

Lk. 21

Lk. 21:13 speaks of how when a believer is persecuted, “it shall turn to you for a testimony”. What does this really mean? For me, the most satisfactory explanation would be that the Angels give a positive testimony of the faithful believer in the court of Heaven. There is active discussion about us going on today in God's Angelic council in Heaven!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

September 29

1 Chron. 12

The system of God's manifestation has remained constant- both through the Angels in Heaven and the organizations of men on earth. Thus 1 Chron. 12:8 describes David's ecclesia in the wilderness as having faces "like the faces of lions" (Angel-cherubim language?), being "a great host, like the host of God"- David's host became increasingly in line with God's Heavenly Hosts of Angels, the four living creatures. We too today are representing God and His heavenly Angels here on earth. He is using us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels3_1.htm

Ez. 25

Many are perplexed by questions such as: 'Why does God call this man but not that woman, who seems such a nice person? Why does God allow children and animals to die, in many cases without hope, according to the Bible? Why are many good living people not called to know the Truth? Why do some people suffer so terribly? Why does God allow some to be born mentally ill, and others likewise to suffer through no fault of their own?'. To me, these must remain questions to struggle with. I see no trite answer within the limits of Biblical exposition (4). But for me, this apparently harder side of God in a way attracts me to Him. I see in these imponderables that surely there is a God above, and we are mere men, with all the arrogance of our misunderstanding. This harder side of God converts men, and will convert them at the final judgment. God judged nations [often terribly] in order that men might *know* Him as Yahweh (e.g. Ez. 25:11; 28:22; 30:19). Yahweh is exalted in His judging of men (Is. 5:16). His judgments make His Name / character manifest. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name?...all nations shall come and worship before thee; *for thy judgments are made manifest*" (Rev. 15:4).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/11Christian_Extremism.htm

Lk. 22

For a master to serve his servants was unheard of (Lk. 12:35-38). But this of course was the wonder of what the Lord did for us, "as one who serves" (Lk. 22:27), defining for us our attitude to each other at the memorial table and in all aspects of our lives and relationships. Likewise the master makes the servants "recline at table" (Lk. 12:35-38); they are made to feel like the Master, by the Master Himself! This is what it means to be "in Christ". There's a kind of out of scale inappropriacy about the idea that if the Master comes and finds the servants awake, then He will gird Himself and serve them. Of course they ought to be awake! But it's as if He is so especially impressed by this fact. And we who live awaiting His return need to take note. And the idea of the master serving is of course the idea behind the description of the cross in Phil. 2:6,7. We should have the same awkward sense of wonder at the cross as we have when we recline at the breaking of bread. This implies that those who

serve the emblems are in fact manifesting the Lord Jesus, and are actually of far greater significance than the president or the speaker.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a1-1elements_of_unreality.htm

September 30

1 Chron. 13, 14

1 Chron. 14:15 gives an incident similar to the scenario of the conquest, with the Angel physically going ahead of them and the people having to do their part in following. "When thou (David) shalt hear a sound of going (like the noise of the Angel cherubim in Ezekiel 1?) in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then shalt thou go out to battle; for God (the Angels) is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines". So once the Angels had physically moved forward and David had heard them doing this, he too could move ahead in doing the human part in bringing God's purpose about. David alludes to this as a regular experience when he speaks of God 'going out' with the hosts / armies of Israel (Ps. 60:10 RV). His hosts were as the hosts of God (1 Chron. 11:22)- he walked in step with the Angel Cherubim above him, as Ezekiel was to do later.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels6_1.htm

Ez. 26

Even in the context of speaking of His marriage to Israel, God says that He will punish them "as women that break wedlock are judged" (Ez. 26:38; 23:45). And yet, He didn't. His love was too great, His passion for them too strong; and He even shamed Himself by doing what His own law forbade, the remarriage to a divorced and defiled wife. Perhaps all love involves a degree of paradox and self-contradiction; and a jealous, Almighty God in love was no different. This, to me, is why some Bible verses indicate God has forsaken Israel; and others imply He hasn't and never will. Somehow, even right now, the Jews you meet... are loved still by their God. And he still fantasizes, in a way, over their return to Him. Imagine His utter joy when even one of them does in fact turn to Him! That alone motivates me to preach to Israel today.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Lk. 23

Christ's perfect character is only appreciated by the believers, and therefore it is only to them that God's Name / glory / very own self is revealed by Christ's example. It was to us that God's glory was finally revealed in the death of Christ. To those who wanted to see it, there was almost a visible righteousness exuding from Christ in His time of dying. "Truly this man was the Son of God...Certainly this was a righteous man" (Mk. 15:40; Lk. 23:46) was the response of the Centurion who was "watching Jesus"; and collating the Gospels, it seems he said this twice. "Do we today have that awe at His spiritual achievement? Or is He little more at times than a black box in our brain whom we call "Jesus"?"

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-13It_Is_Finished.htm

October

October 1

1 Chron. 15

The Truth of the Gospel of the cross is the only way to come to salvation. All other religions apart from true Christianity will not give salvation nor a relationship with God. Realising this, David pleads with his people to be a missionary nation: " Give thanks unto Yahweh, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people...for great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods. *For* all the gods of the people are idols; but Yahweh made the heavens" (1 Chron. 15:8,25,26). The more we realize the pathetic fallacy of human religion, indeed the whole and utter vanity of life under this sun, the more we will preach Yahweh's Truth to a tragically wandering, aimless world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-27Christ_Died_For_Us.htm

Ez. 27

The mourning of the prophets over Tyre (Ez. 27:1) and Babylon (Is. 21:3,4) was an embodiment of God's grief even over those not in covenant with Him. And how much more does He weep and suffer with His people Israel in their sufferings (Jer. 12:12; 23:10; Hos. 4:2,3); "my heart yearns / moans for him" (Jer. 31:20). God mourns over the fact that He can see in the future how His people will be mourning their children in the streets (Am. 5:17,18). In all this we see that God is not only a judge, but a judge who suffers with those to whom He gives punishment. And yet how much more did He weep for His beloved Son, suffering as He did *not* because He had sinned. And He weeps for us too in our weeping. There are tears and the yearnings of God in Heaven. We are told to weep with those that weep- and this is a reflection of how God weeps for and with us. And what of our weeping for others?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Lk. 24

The preacher is his message; if the doctrines of the Gospel are truly in us, then we ourselves will naturally be a witness to it in our lives. The Gospel is the savour of Christ; and yet we personally are the savour (2 Cor. 2:14,15); *we* are the epistle and Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 3:3). Thus *the Gospel* was to be preached for a witness to all nations (Mt. 24:14); and yet "ye are witnesses...*you* will be witnesses" (Lk. 24:27; Acts 1:8). The preacher of the Gospel *is* the Gospel; the man is the message, just as the very same word / message was made flesh in the Lord.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1.htm>

October 2

1 Chron. 16

David's bringing the ark to the place which he had prepared (1 Chron. 15:12) is the basis of the Lord's words in Jn. 14:1-3. Clearly the Lord saw David as Himself, and us as the ark. The 'bringing up' or 'lifting up' of the ark (1 Chron. 15:12,22 RVmg.) to a perpetual dwelling place has evident reference to the resurrection. And when the ark was finally brought or lifted up to Zion, David / Jesus dealt bread and wine to the people (1 Chron. 16:3). One practical encouragement from this typology is that the memorial feast is a celebration that in fact we, the ark, have in prospect already been brought or lifted up into the eternal place prepared for us in the Kingdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-3-1David_As_Type_Of_Christ.htm

Ez. 28

The glory of God refers to His essential personality and characteristics. When He 'glorifies Himself', He articulates that personality- e.g. in the condemnation of the wicked or the salvation of His people. Thus God was "glorified" in the judgment of the disobedient (Ez. 28:22; 39:13), just as much as He is "glorified" in the salvation of His obedient people. God is glorifying Himself through us one way or the other, in every life situation we are in- but we need to as it were be on His side, so that we are an abiding part of that glory.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-19.htm>

Gal 1, 2

The Peter who had come so so far, from the headstrong days of Galilee to the shame of the denials, and then on to the wondrous new life of forgiveness and preaching that grace to others, leading the early community that developed upon that basis... that Peter almost went wrong later in life. Peter and the Judaizers makes a sad story. And as always, it was a most unlikely form of temptation that arose and almost blew him right off course. As often, the problem arose from his own brethren rather than from the hostile world outside. There was strong resistance in the Jewish mind to the idea that Gentiles could be saved without keeping the Mosaic law. And more than this, there was the feeling that any Jewish believer who advocated that they could was selling out and cheapening the message of God to men. Paul has to write about this whole shameful episode in Gal. 2. It becomes apparent that Peter very nearly denied the Lord that bought him once again, by placing on one side all the evidence of salvation by pure grace, for *all* men whether the be Jew or Gentile, which he had progressively built up over the past years. Paul, using Peter's old name, comments how Cephas seemed to be a pillar- but wasn't (Gal. 2:9). Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (2:11). Peter and some other Jewish believers "dissembled" and along with Barnabas "was carried away with their dissimulation", with the result that they "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (2:12-14). Paul's whole speech to Peter seems to be recorded in Gal. 2:15-21. He concludes by saying that if Peter's toleration of justification by works rather than by Christ was really so, then Christ was dead in vain. Paul spoke of how for him, he is crucified with Christ, and lives only for Him, "who loved me and gave himself for me". These were exactly the sentiments which Peter held so dear, and Paul

knew they would touch a chord with him. Is it possible that church politics likewise can rpbpo of us of a simple focus upon the Gospel of grace?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-4-2Peter_And_The_Judaizers.htm

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net>

October 3

1 Chron. 17

1 Chron. 17 records God's response in clear enough language: God did not want a physical house. And yet in the end He agreed, apparently even giving dimensions for it, and His glory came and dwelt in it. This is how far God is eager for relationship with us, and will go along with us even when we chose paths which are not His ideal ones.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-2Solomon_And_The_Temple.htm

Ez. 29

In the Millennium, God will use a repentant Israel to achieve great things in terms of converting this world unto Himself. They will walk up and down in His Name, witnessing to Him as He had originally intended them to (Zech. 10:12); men will cling to their skirts in order to find the knowledge of their God (Zech. 8:23). “In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee (Israel) the opening of the mouth in the midst of them (the surrounding nations, see context); and *they* shall know that I am the LORD”, in that Israel will preach to them from their own experience of having recently come to know Yahweh (Ez. 29:21). But at the time of the Lord’s return, when Israel repent and enter the new covenant with Him, they will remember all their past sins “and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame...for all that thou hast done” (Ez. 16:63). They will be so ashamed that they *will feel as if* they can never open their mouth. But Yahweh will open their mouth, and they will witness. In some anticipation of this, Ezekiel as the “son of man” prophet, a representative of his people just as the Lord was to be, had his mouth shut in dumbness, and he only had his mouth opened when Israel came to know [to some degree] that “I am the LORD” (Ez. 24:27). In all these evident connections something marvellous presents itself. Those who feel as if they just cannot open their mouths in witness are the very ones whom the Father will use; He will open their mouths and use them exactly because they are ashamed of their sins! And so it should be with us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

Gal 3, 4

In Jn. 18:37 Jesus told Pilate in the context of His upcoming death that He had come into this world to bear witness to the truth- the cross was the supreme witness and exhibition of the truth. There was no doctrine preached there, but rather the way of life which those doctrines ultimately lead to. Gal. 3:1 remonstrates with the Galatians as to how they could not obey the truth when the crucified Christ had been so clearly displayed to them; clearly Paul saw obedience to the truth as obedience to the implications of the cross. There is a powerful

parallel in Gal. 4:16: I am your enemy because I tell you the truth... you are enemies of the cross of Christ. Thus the parallel is made between the cross and the truth. We are sanctified by the truth (Jn. 17:19); but our sanctification is through cleansing in the Lord's blood. The same word is used of our sanctification through that blood (Heb. 9:13; 10:29; 13:12). Perhaps this is why Dan. 8:11,12 seems to describe the altar as "the truth". The cross of Jesus is the ultimate truth. There we see humanity for what we really are; there we see the real effect of sin. Yet above all, there we see the glorious reality of the fact that a Man with our nature overcame sin, and through His sacrifice we really can be forgiven the untruth of all our sin; and thus have a real, concrete, definite hope of the life eternal.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4-4the_truth_of_christ.htm

October 4

1 Chron. 18, 19

After David received the promises about the future Messianic Kingdom, he went out and established his Kingdom, attacking Israel's enemies and driving them out of the land (1 Chron. 18:1-3). Our response to the future Hope of the Kingdom, which we too have through the very same promises, should be to try to live the Kingdom life now, as far as we can.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Ez. 30

During the judgment upon Egypt, "at Tehaphnehes also the day shall withdraw itself" (Ez. 30:18). This will occur when Egypt comes to know the Lord through His judgments (Ez. 30:19)- and this can only refer to the last days. So again, it would seem that some sort of collapse of time will occur during the judgment period. For us today, time is so important; let's try to grasp something of how God sees time differently, and how different it all will be ultimately.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-1God_and_Time.html

Gal 5, 6

To love one's neighbour as oneself is to fulfil the law (Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:10); and yet the Lord's death was the supreme fulfilment of it (Mt. 5:18; Col. 2:14). Here was the definition of love for one's neighbour. Not a passing politeness and occasional seasonal gift, whilst secretly and essentially living the life of self-love and self-care; but the love and the death of the cross, for His neighbours as for Himself; laying down His life "for himself that it might be for us" in the words of Robert Roberts. In Him, in His time of dying, we see the definition of love, the fulfilment of the justice and unassuming kindness and thought for others which was taught in the Mosaic Law. And we through bearing one another's burdens, through bearing with their moral and intellectual and spiritual failures, must likewise fulfil the law, in a voluntary laying down of our lives for each other (Gal. 6:2). And in this, as with the Lord, will be our personal salvation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/7-5glorifying_god_in_preaching.htm

October 5

1 Chron. 20, 21

David perceived the vital importance of *truly* giving, not just on a surface level: "Thou shalt grant it me for the full price, *that* the plague may be stayed" (1 Chron. 21:22). He saw that God's response to his request would only be if he gave fully to the Lord, rather than using another man's generosity with which to approach God. The crucial choice is serving God or mammon.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-1Serving_God_Or_Mammon.htm

Ez. 31

The language of being cast down to the underworld and the darkness of the grave in Jude 6 all features in the record of Egypt's judgment in Ez. 31:16-18. Yet Egypt was not literally cast down from Heaven. The allusion to Egypt is to show how the apostate Jews in the wilderness were treated as if they were actually Egyptians- because in their hearts they turned back to Egypt. If we are of this world, we will share in its judgment; we must come out of "Babylon" lest we be consumed in her condemnation.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/23chains.htm>

Eph 1, 2

We died and rose with Christ in baptism; and in a spiritual sense even *ascended* with Him to heavenly places in Him, and even *sit with Him there* (Eph. 2:6). 1 Cor. 15:12 reasons that there absolutely must be a resurrection of those in Christ, simply because *Christ* rose. Those in Him absolutely must rise, therefore; to disbelieve in our resurrection is to disbelieve in His. <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3.htm>

October 6

1 Chron. 22

We can assume that our consciences are effectively the will of God; thus we 'play God' by allowing our words and will to count as if they are *His* word. Even early on, Solomon had a way of spinning things, even God's word, in his own selfish way. David had insisted that God had told him that he couldn't build the temple because he had shed so much blood in war (1 Chron. 22:8). But Solomon just slightly spins this when he asks Hiram to come and help him build the temple, because, he says, his father David hadn't had the time to get around to the job because of being busy fighting wars (1 Kings 5:3). He says nothing about David shedding blood; the moral aspect of it all is nicely ignored by Solomon.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-7Solomon_And_Wisdom.htm

Ez. 32

That the cross was the judgment of the world is further brought out by reflecting upon the prophesied judgment upon Egypt [common symbol of the world] in Ez. 32. There was to be darkness at noon, and "I will make many peoples amazed at thee" (Ez. 32:7,8,10 RV), just as they were by the cross (Is. 52:14). The judgment of Egypt / the world had some elements of fulfillment in the 'judgment of this world' which occurred through the cross. Insofar as we seriously reflect upon the cross, we have a foretaste of the judgment. Our feelings and revealing of our conscience will be similar to that at the last day. Hence self-examination occurs naturally at the breaking of bread, if we are focused upon the Lord's death.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/14.htm>

Eph 3, 4

The various parts of the one body *supply* strength to the rest of us (Eph. 4:16). But the very same Greek word rendered "supply" occurs in the Phil. 1:19, about the *supply* of the spirit of Jesus Christ. How does He *supply* our need and strengthen us? Through the very human members of the one body. Which is why we so desperately need them, and to walk away from them, reasoning that they 'give nothing', is in a sense to turn away from the supply of the spirit of Jesus.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

October 7

1 Chron. 23

Solomon taught that if the ants can be so zealous, well why can't the ecclesia of God be zealous [for it was 'believers' that he was teaching]. The ants scurry around, working as if there is no tomorrow, to build up something so precarious that is in any case so tragically short lived. Can't we be yet more zealous, with a like loving co-operation, building the eternal things that we are (Prov. 6:6,7)? And Solomon pressed the point further, in that ants are self-motivated; they need no "guide, overseer or ruler". This was surely a reference to the complex system of overseers which Solomon had to place over Israel in order to build the temple and build up the Kingdom. The same Hebrew word for "overseer" is found in 1 Chron. 23:4; 26:29. Yet ideally, he seems to be saying, every Israelite ought to be a zealous worker. Prov. 12:24 says the same: "The hand of the diligent [*whoever* he / she is] shall bear rule [in practice]" [s.w. Prov. 6:7 "ruler"]. And we must ask ourselves, whether for whatever reason the new Israel hasn't slumped into the same problem, of lack of self-motivation, waiting to be asked to do something before we do it, over-relying upon our "overseers". The ants aren't like this. They see the job to be done, and naturally get on with it.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/13.htm>

Ez. 33

If we do not warn the wicked of their way, "his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ez. 33:8). Some will have to give an account at the last day of their specific lack of witness. Yet we can live day after day, saying nothing to our fellows, as if it doesn't really matter, because nobody notices...

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_4.htm

Eph 5, 6

There is no doubt at all that television has a major influence especially upon young people-world-wide. It is far from just a Western problem. If we let our children watch it uncontrolled, we are agreeing that we have signed them over to this kind of influence. If we teach them bodily self control, warn them against fornication...how can we resign our God given influence as parents and youth workers to the television? Just so...that we can work and relax for longer hours...? I would say that the single biggest danger for our youth is the influence of the TV. If uncontrolled, it is a force stronger than any other influence- including parental influence. I can understand those Christian parents who don't have one, and who don't allow their children to go to the movies unaccompanied, if at all. Immorality is not to be even thought of or spoken of by a Christian (1 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 6:3). Let's get serious. Either these verses mean what they say, or they don't. Do we want to bring these into our homes and before the eyes of our children...or not?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

October 8

1 Chron. 24, 25

It was promised to the family of Aaron that the priesthood would be theirs for a perpetual statute (Ex. 29:9). And yet the family of Eli, a descendant of Aaron (1 Kings 2:27; 1 Chron. 24:3), were told that they were to be cut off as they had abused the priesthood. The promise of Exodus was therefore conditional, although the conditions weren't laid down. Indeed, just because of this fact, the Levites often assumed that they were acceptable just by reason of who they were. Our salvation has been promised; but there are still conditions. We need to reflect upon them today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

Ez. 34

Because the priests omitted to care for Israel, they were counted as the wolves- their sin of omission was counted as one of commission (Ez. 34:9,10). What are our sins of omission today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-4Sins_Of_Omission.htm

Phil. 1, 2

The parable of the unjust steward makes the point that in the Kingdom, the faithful will be given by Christ " the true riches...that which is your (very) own" (Lk. 16:12). The reward given will to some degree be totally personal. Each works out his *own* salvation, such as it will be (Phil. 2:12)- not in the sense of achieving it by works, but rather that the sort of spirituality we develop now will be the essential person we are in the eternity of God's Kingdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-2Relationships_In_The_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

October 9

1 Chron. 26

The promises God makes involve a solemn commitment by Him to us- the serious, binding nature of His oath to us is easy to forget. God swore to David “by my holiness” (Ps. 89:35). The Hebrew for “holiness” is the very same word translated “dedication”. David’s response to God’s dedication to him was to dedicate [s.w.] all the silver and gold which he had won from this world, to the service of God’s house (1 Kings 7:51; 1 Chron. 26:26; 2 Chron. 5:1). Our response to God’s dedication to us should be a like dedication of what we have to Him. Covenant relationship with God requires much of both Him and us. The case of David is a nice illustration of the meaning of grace. David wanted to *do* something for God- build Him a house, spending his wealth to do so. God replied that no, He wanted to build *David* a house. And He started to, in the promises He gave David. And David’s response to that grace is to still *do* something- to dedicate his wealth to God’s house, as God had dedicated Himself to David’s house. This is just how grace and works should be related in our experience.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Ez. 35

Paul twice assures his readers that he speaks the truth because he is speaking in the sight / presence of God (2 Cor. 2:17; 12:19). The fact God is everywhere present through His Spirit, that He exists, should lead us at the very least to be truthful. In the day of judgment, a condemned Israel will know that God heard their every word; but if we accept that fact now then we will be influenced in our words now. And by our words we will be justified (Ez. 35:12).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-4God_Sees_And_Knows_All.htm

Phi 3, 4

Our task of witness may likewise seem hopeless. But we are to be prepared (“be instant”) to preach “in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2). “Out of season” translates a Greek word only elsewhere rendered ‘lacking opportunity’ (Phil. 4:10). Whether there is apparent opportunity or not, we must still witness- not just wait until someone asks us if we are religious. This is a common fallacy we all fall into at times. Several times the Lord invites us to “go” and preach- we are all to feel a spirit of outgoing witness, rather than the defensive, tell-them-if-they-ask attitude which has dominated so many of us for so long. We need the same spirit of heroism in our witness which Jeremiah and Ezekiel had, as they reflected the indomitable Spirit of God in this matter of human salvation. Our unbelieving families, our workmates, our neighbours, seem to be stony ground to the point that it just isn’t worth bothering. But we need a positive spirit.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8-1a_positive_spirit_in_preaching.htm

October 10

1 Chron. 27

There were very specific spheres of authority in David's kingdom. 1 Chron.27 outlines how someone was over the tribute, another over the army, the camels, the asses, the flocks, the sellers of oil, the vineyards, the tillage of the ground etc. (see 1 Chron.27). It may be that Solomon's wisdom concerning the natural creation was for the benefit of those who had the charge over the different animals and elements of agriculture. There may be a similar specific subdivision in the Kingdom; one of us, or a group of us, in control of, e.g., the camels, or a certain type of animal. We will be guided by the wisdom of Solomon/Jesus in how to control that animal and the use of it to the glory of God. The natural world is presently under the control of the Angels; but it is to be handed over to us.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/26.htm>

Ez. 36

There is a repeated theme that Israel's entry into the New Covenant will be associated with God doing something to their hearts, confirming their own change of mind. In other words, the covenant is largely a matter of the mind. This new state of mind is in fact fundamentally part of being in covenant relationship with God: " This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel...I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..." (Jer. 31:33). This leads us to the paramount need for us to develop genuine spiritual mindedness, the thinking, the breathing of God's Spirit in our minds. So God will act upon Israel's heart directly, using the medium of His word to do so. The initiative is God's; He will write His word upon their hearts. He is not passively offering people the opportunity to do it to themselves; He will do it to Israel. The same heart-swop operation is described in Ez. 36:25,26: " Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness...will I cleanse you (cp. our baptism into the new covenant). A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...I will put my spirit within you (note the double emphasis), and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" . Being in the new covenant is therefore characterized by having a new spirit, a new mind, and therefore a new way of life. And so Heb. 10:20 calls the new covenant " a new and living way" , a new, living way of life. Jer. 31:33 said that God would place His laws in Israel's heart; in Ez. 36 we read that He will place His Spirit in their hearts. So the way in which God will give Israel a new heart will be through their response to the word. Thus they too will enter the new covenant.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-3The_New_Covenant.html

Jn. 1

The Lord 'found' Philip, and he responded by 'finding' Nathanael and saying that they had 'found' the Messiah. Philip found the Lord, and the Lord found him. And he responded by going forth and finding another man for the Lord (Jn. 1:43,45). This mutuality between God and man is going on with us today. We reach out to others in response to how the Lord has reached out to us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-3Mutuality_Between_God_And_Man.htm

October 11

1 Chron. 28

There can be no doubt that David was proud about his sons; his sappy obsession with Absalom indicates that he cast both spirituality and rationality to the winds when it came to them. The words of 1 Chron.28:5,6 indicate this: " Of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house *and my courts* : for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father" . We have to ask: Is this what God actually said? The records of the promises to David in 2 Sam.7 and 1 Chron. 17 contain no specific reference to Solomon, nor do they speak of him building physical courts for God. We have shown that the Davidic promise is fundamentally concerning David's greater household, rather than a physical house. So it seems that David became obsessed with the idea of Solomon being the Messiah, building a physical house for God, and being king over the eternal Messianic Kingdom. The words of Ps. 110:1 are applied by the NT to Jesus, but there is no reason to think that they were not primarily spoke by David with his eye on Solomon, whom he addresses as his Lord, such was his obsession: "The Lord saith unto my Lord..." (RV), and the rest of the Psalm goes on in the language of Ps. 72 to describe David's hopes for Solomon's Kingdom. 'Solomon' was actually called 'Jedidiah' by God through Nathan (2 Sam. 12:25). The 'beloved of God' was surely prophetic of God's beloved Son. When God said "This is my beloved Son", He was surely saying 'Now THIS is the Jedidiah, whom I wanted Solomon to typify'. But David calls him Solomon, the man who would bring peace. I suggest that David was so eager to see in Solomon the actual Messiah, that he chose not to use the name which God wanted- which made Solomon a type of a future Son of God / Messiah. And this led to Solomon himself being obsessed with being a Messiah figure and losing sight of the future Messiah.

The point has been made elsewhere that David seems to have become obsessed with preparing for the physical building of the temple in his old age. He truly commented: " The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 69:9). The RV margin of 1 Chron. 28:12 makes us wonder whether the dimensions of the temple were in fact made up within David's own mind: "David gave to Solomon his son the pattern...the pattern that he had in his spirit [AV "by the spirit"] for the...house of the Lord".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-2Solomon_And_The_Temple.htm

Ez. 37

The prophecy of the new covenant applies to us today. The description of Israel receiving a new heart, being spiritually re-created, is taken up in earnest in this chapter. It describes the bones coming together, the Spirit of God entering into them through the prophecy of the Son of man (Ezekiel), and their resurrection. This is all couched in the language of Adam's creation; firstly as a body, and then the spirit being breathed into him. 2 Cor.5:17 describes us after entry into Christ at baptism as a " new creation" . What all this means is that under the new covenant, we really do experience God acting upon our hearts, through His word. The very least we can do, once we are aware of this, is to read the word daily, and think upon it. As we read those words, God is writing upon our hearts, our inward parts, the handwriting of God Himself is being placed on our innermost beings. When you think of it like that, there really can be no excuse for not reading the word daily.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-3The_New_Covenant.html

Jn. 2, 3

Remember the disciples' angry "Carest thou not that we perish?" (Mk. 4:38). His whole life and death were because He *did* so care that they would not perish (Jn. 3:16). It's so reminiscent of a child's total, if temporary, misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of the parent's love and self-sacrifice. Yet this Lord is our Lord, patient with our 'moments' today as well.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-3Weakness_Of_The_Disciples.htm

October 12

1 Chron. 29

The final reminder at the end of the Lord's prayer that "thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory" is evidently a conscious reference to David's prayer on gathering materials to build the temple: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chron. 29:11). The context is David saying that God can do absolutely everything, because absolutely everything, past, present and future, belongs to Him. He continues: "Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (1 Chron. 29:12). So what David is saying is that because the Kingdom, power and glory all belong to God, absolutely every material thing and every possible action is His and within His potential power to do for us... therefore we leave our prayer on that note. It's not only a note of praise, but an expression of faith that, quite simply, God can and will provide, in the very end.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/4-2power_of_prayer.htm

Ez. 38

There is coming a time when the two worlds, the two Kingdoms, will experience their inevitable collision in the return of Christ. The stone will smite the image, and grind those kingdoms to powder. God's anger will come up in His face against this world (Joel 3:2,13,16; Ez. 38:18-22; 39:17,20); and the world will be angry with God and His people in an unsurpassed way. The nations will be angry, and the wrath of God also will rise (Rev. 11:18). When their iniquity has reached a certain level, then judgment will fall (cp. Sodom and the Amorites, Gen. 15:16). This means that there will almost certainly be some form of persecution of God's people by the people of this world in the very last days. The tension between the believer and the world will rise. The final political conflict in the land of Israel will be the ultimate and inevitable collision of flesh and spirit, of the serpent and the woman. As the nations will be gathered together to their day of threshing (Rev. 16:16), so will the responsible be (Mic. 4:12; Mt. 3:12). The burning up of the nations will be the same punishment as the rejected believers receive- they will in some sense go back into the world they never separated from, and share it's destiny.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-6-4Worlds_In_Collision.htm

Jn. 4

Whoever drinks of the water of life will have *within* them a spring that also gives eternal life (Jn. 4:15). The purpose of a spring is to give water to men. Experiencing the Lord's words and salvation *inevitably* leads to us doing likewise to others, springing from somewhere deep within. This was in fact one of the first things God promised Abraham when He first instituted the new covenant: " I will bless thee (i.e. with forgiveness and salvation in the Kingdom)...and *thou* shalt be a blessing" , in that we his seed in Christ would bring this same blessing to men of all nations by our witness (Gen. 12:2,3). When the Lord offered salvation to the woman at the well, He spoke of how it would be a spring of life going out from her. She wanted it, but apparently just for herself. Therefore when she asked to be given such a spring, the Lord replied by asking her to bring her husband to hear His words (Jn. 4:15,16). Surely He was saying: 'If you want this great salvation for yourself, you've got to be willing to share it with others, no matter how embarrassing this may be for you'. In a similar figure, the Bible begins with the tree of the lives [Heb.], and concludes with men eating of the tree and there appearing a forest of trees-of-life. Our experience of salvation will be the basis of our witness to men in the Millennium, just as it should be now. On the basis of our experience of reconciliation with God, we have been given "the ministry of reconciliation", in that God "hath put in us [Gk. settled deep within us] the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18,19) . That which is deeply internal issues in an outward witness. For this reason all discussion of how that outward witness should be made is somewhat irrelevant- the witness naturally springs from deep within. If it doesn't, we have to ask whether we have anything much deep within.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

October 13

2 Chron. 1, 2

The deeper our realization of God's greatness, the higher our response. Thus Solomon built a " great" house for Yahweh, " for great is our God above all gods" (2 Chron. 2:5).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-25Jesus_Is_Lord.htm

Ez. 39

In some way, the harder side of God attracts, in that men see in truth that He is God and they but men. His rod and staff of correction are our comforts (Ps. 23:4). Israel will finally realize that God's judgments upon them have brought them to know Him: "They shall know that I am the Lord, in that I caused them to go into captivity" (Ez. 39:28 RV). It's rather like how the idea of conditional salvation, and that not for everybody but a tiny minority, I find both hard to accept and yet the very thing that clinches the actual reality of 'the truth' we hold.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_1.htm

Jn. 5

Only when men were focused on their desperate need for the Lord would He answer them. The Lord further focused men's need when he asked the lame man: "Wilt thou be made whole?" (Jn. 5:6). Of course the man wanted healing. But the Lord first of all focused his

desire for it. He told the story of the man who had a desperate need at midnight, and because of his utter importunity he was driven to throw himself upon the grace of another; and, the Lord taught, so is a man with God, holding himself back from throwing himself upon Him, until the realization of his desperation compels him. And so is a man with God (Lk. 11:5-8).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-5Our_Desperation.htm

October 14

2 Chron. 3, 4

Stephen saw Solomon's building of the temple in a negative, as indicated by the link between Acts 7:41 and 48: " They made a calf...and rejoiced in *the works of their own hands* ...howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples *made with hands* ". The word " made" is stressed in the record of Solomon's building the temple (2 Chron. 3:8,10,14-16; 4:1,2,6-9,14,18,19,21). The work of the temple was very much produced by men's *hands* (2 Chron. 2:7,8). Things made with hands refers to idols in several Old Testament passages (e.g. Is. 2:8; 17:8; 31:7). Significantly, Solomon's temple is described as being made with hands in 1 Chron. 29:5. And it may be significant that the words of Is. 66:1,2 concerning God not living in temples are quoted by Paul with reference to pagan temples in Acts 17:24, and concerning the temple in Jerusalem by Stephen. The building of the temple became an idol to Solomon. Human motives get terribly mixed. One is reminded of William Golding's novel, *The Spire*, in which a bishop becomes obsessed with building a huge spire on his church- subliminally finding in it a phallic symbol. The temple project became an obsession with Solomon; after his death, his people complained at the "grievous servitude" which Solomon had subjected them to (2 Chron. 10:4). But the Hebrew word "servitude" is that repeatedly used to describe the "service" of the temple by the people (1 Chron. 25:6; 26:8,30; 27:26; 28:13-15,20,21; 29:7; 2 Chron. 8:14). Solomon became obsessed with making others 'serve God' when it was effectively serving him; he came to be abusive to God's people, when the initial idea of the temple was that it was to be built in order to help God's people serve Him. And such obsession, turning well motivated projects into means of personal ego tripping, with all the resultant abuse, has sadly not been unknown amongst us. Yet God still worked through Solomon's project; so eager is He to work with us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-2Solomon_And_The_Temple.htm

Ez. 40

God's experience with the Jews in exile is a classic warning to us. He set them up with the possibility to return to Judah, to establish there a Messianic-style Kingdom, giving them the commands in Ez. 40-47 for a glorious temple; but most of them preferred the soft life in Babylon, and those who did return proved small minded, selfish and disinterested in the vision of God's glory. In this context, Isaiah ends his restoration prophecies on a tragic note from God: "I was ready to be sought... I was ready to be found" (Is. 65:1) by the unspiritual exiles in Babylon. But Israel would not. He pictures Himself standing there crying "Here am I, here am I!"- to be rejected by a people more interested in climbing the endless economic and social ladder in Babylon and Persia.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Jn. 6

The Spirit of Jesus, His disposition, His mindset, His way of thinking and being, is paralleled with His words and His person. They both 'quicken' or give eternal life, right now. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth [present tense]...the words that I speak unto you, they are [right now] spirit, and they are life...thou hast [right now] the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:63,68). Yet at the last day, God will quicken the dead and physically give them eternal life (Rom. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:22,36). But this will be because in this life we had the 'Spirit' of the eternal life in us: "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by [on account of] his spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Are we developing that spirit today...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/22-3eternal_life_assured_now.htm

October 15

2 Chron. 5, 6

David's response to God's dedication to him was to dedicate [s.w.] all the silver and gold which he had won from this world, to the service of God's house (1 Kings 7:51; 1 Chron. 26:26; 2 Chron. 5:1). Our response to God's dedication to us should be a like dedication of what we have to Him. Covenant relationship with God requires much of both Him and us. The case of David is a nice illustration of the meaning of grace. David wanted to *do* something for God- build Him a house, spending his wealth to do so. God replied that no, He wanted to build *David* a house. And He started to, in the promises He gave David. And David's response to that grace is to still *do* something- to dedicate his wealth to God's house, as God had dedicated Himself to David's house. This is just how grace and works should be related in our experience.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Ez. 41

The breaking of bread is described as eating at "the table of the Lord" (1 Cor. 10:21). This was Old Testament language for the altar (Ez. 41:22). By eating from it we are partaking of the altar, the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 9:13; 10:18; Heb. 13:10). If we don't partake of it, we declare ourselves to have no part in Him. Yet the very fact we partake of it, is a statement that we have pledged ourselves to separation from this present world; for it is not possible to eat at the Lord's table, and also that of this world (1 Cor. 10:21).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-5Importance_of_Breaking_of_Bread.html

Jn. 7

if we behold and believe the cross, we will respond. The Lord mused that if He didn't allow Himself to fall to the ground and die, no fruit could be brought forth (Jn. 12:24). The fact He did means that we will bring forth fruit. It could be that the reference in Jn. 7 to the Holy Spirit being given at the Lord's death (His 'glory'), as symbolized by the water flowing from His side, means that due to the cross we have the inspiration to a holy, spiritual way of life. It is not so that His death released some mystical influence which would change men and

women whether or not they will it; rather is it that His example there inspires those who are open to it. We "have been reconciled to God" through the cross of Jesus, and yet therefore we must "be reconciled to God", and take the message of reconciliation to others. What has been achieved there in prospect we have to make real for us, by appropriating it to ourselves in repentance, baptism and a life of ongoing repentance (2 Cor. 5:18-20 cp. Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:14,15).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/3-3constrained_by_the_love_of_christ.htm

October 16

2 Chron. 7

2 Chron. 7:12 says that God accepted the temple only as a place of sacrifice, i.e. a glorified altar (cp. 2 Sam. 24:17,18). And yet- God didn't really want sacrifice (Ps. 40:6; Heb. 10:5). " Now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever" (2 Chron.7:16) is a conditional promise, followed by five verses of conditions concerning Solomon's spirituality which he overlooked. Like Solomon, we too can fix upon promises without considering their conditionality. There is good reason to think that communally and individually we are increasingly shutting our eyes to the possibility of our spiritual failure and disaster. God constantly warned Solomon about the conditionality of the promises, before the building started (2 Sam. 7:14), during it (1 Kings 6:11-13) and immediately after completing it (1 Kings 9:2-9). Note, too, that Solomon had the idea that if sinful Israel prayed towards the temple, they would somehow be forgiven because of this. God's response was that if they sought *Him* wherever they were and repented, then He would hear them- the temple was not to be seen as the instrument or mediatrix of forgiveness which Solomon envisaged. Likewise, Solomon's implication that prayer offered in the temple would be especially acceptable was not upheld by God's reply to him about this (2 Chron. 6:24-26 cp. God's response in 2 Chron. 7:12,13).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-2Solomon_And_The_Temple.htm

Ez. 42

At the time of the restoration, so many of the prophecies about a Messiah figure *could* have had their fulfilment in Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel, or some other Messianic figure at that time. Everything was made possible to enable this- Joshua, who couldn't prove his Levitical genealogy, was given "a place of access" amongst the priesthood, those who "stood" before the Lord (Zech. 3:7 RV). Ezra thanked God that they had returned and that they had "a nail in his holy place" (Ezra 9:8), a reference surely to a Messiah figure whom he felt to be among them, the "nail in a sure place" of Is. 22:23. According to Mt. 1:12 and Lk. 3:27, Zerubbabel was the Prince of Judah, and the rightful heir to David's throne. But due to his weakness, the fulfilment was deferred to Jesus. Zech. 3:7-10 contained the same message to Joshua: "*If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge [as so frequently commanded in Ez. 40:46; 44:8,14-16 s.w.], then thou shalt also judge my house (as prophesied in Ez. 40-48), and shalt also keep my courts (so often mentioned in Ez. 40-48), and I will give thee places to walk (s.w. Ez. 42:4 about the walkways in the prophesied temple)...hear now, O Joshua*". But he didn't. He didn't keep the courts, but allowed Tobiah the Ammonite to set up his office for subversion in the temple chambers. Likewise

Zerubbabel was to hold a measuring line in his hand and rebuild the temple (Zech. 4:10), just as the Angels had held the same measuring line over the temple in Ez. 40 and Zech. 2:1. He is told that it will not be due to “an army” but due to God’s Spirit / Angel (Zech. 4:6 RVmg). The “army” refers to the army which the King of Babylon was willing to send with the returning exiles in order to support the returning exiles. We too are anointed through being in Christ, the anointed one. But will we rise up to it, or let the possibilities slip through our fingers?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-7-2Zerubbabel_Potential_Messiah.htm

Jn. 8

If we “keep” in mind the Lord’s words, we will never “see death” (Jn. 8:51)- death itself will be perceived differently by us, if our hearts are ever with Him who conquered death, and is the resurrection and the life. If our view of death itself, the unspoken deepest personal fear of all humanity, is different... we will be radically different from our fellows.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

October 17

2 Chron. 8

It seems to me that David didn’t challenge Solomon, nor did he teach him the spirit of cross-carrying service. His big desire was that Solomon would build a temple. But Solomon loved building. Solomon built “for his pleasure”, for *his* will, whereas the Kingdom of God is about doing the will / pleasure of God (2 Chron. 8:6 RV). Solomon was being taught by David to serve God in a way which only reinforced his own personality type and in ways which were already what he naturally wanted to do. It would be rather like a father teaching his young son that you serve God by playing with your train set, and nothing else is needed. Or when the son gets older, that all you have to do to serve God is to go to social events and hang out with your Christian friends. This is all too easy. The service of God *is* joyful, and yes it can be ‘fun’, but the essence of sinful man serving his God is struggle against his own humanity. Could it be that we in the West have often spoon fed their kids on a diet of ‘safe’ service. But if they are challenged to step out and put themselves on the line a bit more, particularly in the area of local witnessing, would not the harvest be a bit different? Brethren and sisters with initiative, with commitment, with the spirit of self-sacrifice rather than young adults who think that our faith is about ice cream and pizza and endless fun and games, with a bit of Bible reading thrown in? As my manner is, I am caricaturing. I know so, so many fine and committed young brethren and sisters. But perhaps there are fractions of truth and relevance in the caricature. For in the end, Christianity is not in books, church halls or Sunday School classes, but in the real world, where it is practiced and demonstrated. It is a reaching out from ourselves and our comfort zones to do something transformingly significant in the lives of those around us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-4-2Solomon_And_David.htm

Ez. 43

The knowledge and practice of the presence of God ought to keep us back from sin. Ez. 43:8 RV points out how Israel were so wrong to have brought idols into the temple: " in their

setting of their threshold by my threshold, and their door post beside my door post, and there was but the wall between me and them" . How close God was ought to have made them quit their idolatry. But their cognizance of the closeness of God was merely theoretical. They didn't feel nor respond to the wonder of it. And truly, He is not far from every one of us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-1Practicing_The_Presence_Of_God.htm

Jn. 9, 10

Time and again is it stressed that the Lord did all He did "for us". Jn. 10:14,15 link His knowing of us His sheep, and His giving His life for us. It was because He knew us, our sins, or kind of failures, who we are and who we would be, and fail to be...that He did it. And knowing our brethren, building understanding and relationship with them, is how and why we will be motivated to the same laying down of life for them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-13It_Is_Finished.htm

October 18

2 Chron. 9

Solomon had what we might call obsessive tendencies. We know that he became addicted to finding pleasure in women, and Ecc.2 shows him racing down the road of obsession with architecture, alcohol, food, gold etc. The historical narratives so often mention his gold and silver (eg 2 Chron. 9:13,14,15,16,17,18,20,21,24,27). This repetition reflects Solomon's obsession. The same fact explains the record's repetition of Solomon's enthusiasm for horses (1 Kings 10:26,29; 4:26,28; 9:19,22; 10:25,28; 2 Chron.1:14,16,17; 8:6,9; 9:24,25,28). Yet amassing of gold, silver and horses was explicitly forbidden for the King of Israel (Dt.17:17). There is a powerful point to be made here: we can deceive ourselves that God is blessing us, when actually we are breaching explicit commands. Would Solomon had understood the concept of self-examination.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-6Solomons_Materialism_And_SelfFulfilment.htm

Ez. 44

All Israel were to aspire to the spirit of priesthood. Indeed, the Psalms often parallel the house of Aaron (i.e. the priesthood) with the whole nation (Ps. 115:9,10,12; 118:2,3). Paul speaks of us each one partaking of "the table of the Lord" (1 Cor. 10:21), a phrase used in the LXX for the altar (Ez. 44:16; Mal. 1:7,12)- the sacrifices whereof only the priests could eat. This would have been radical thinking to a community used to priests and men delegated to take charge of others' religious affairs. Hebrew 3:13 gets at this idea when we read that *we* are to exhort one another not to turn away, situated as we are on the brink of the promised land, just as Moses exhorted Israel. It was accepted in Judaism, as well as in many other contemporary religions, that faithful saints [e.g. the patriarchs, Moses, the prophets etc, in Judaism's case] could intercede for the people. Yet in the New Testament, *all* believers are urged to intercede for each other, even to the point of seeking to gain forgiveness for others' sins (1 Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18; James 5:15). They were *all* to do this vital work. The radical nature of this can easily be overlooked by us, reading from this distance.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a1.htm>

Jn. 11

The infinite encouragement to us in our weakness is that Christ derived such comfort and strength from men of such limited spiritual perception. His fondness for them is indicated by the tears of Mary moving him to weep too (Jn. 11:33). The Lord's patience with the disciples as children, His awareness of their limitations, His gentleness, His changing of His expectations of them according to their weaknesses, all provides powerful comfort to the latter day disciple. So many times He didn't correct their evidently wrong ideas, as one doesn't with children, but patiently worked with them to bring them to truth. His approach to demons is the most common single example. When He had them go with Him unto Lazarus, they mistakenly thought He meant 'let us go and die too' (Jn. 11:12-16)- and yet He graciously didn't correct them, but let events take their course. And we can take a lesson from this, in how we relate to others we may see to be 'in error'. It's not really about direct confrontation, which ends up proving us right and them wrong, without actually bringing them to a personal conviction of the truth in question.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/15-6Disciples_As_Children.htm

October 19

2 Chron. 10, 11

"He that loveth silver (as Solomon did, Ecc. 2:8; 1 Kings 10:21-29) shall not be satisfied with silver (as he wasn't- see Ecc. 2); nor he that loveth abundance (s.w. used about the abundance of Solomon's wives, 2 Chron. 11:23) with increase. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them (cp. the large numbers at his table, 1 Kings 4:27)" (Ecc. 5:10,11). The Hebrew word translated "not be satisfied" occurs around 25 times in the Proverbs, with Solomon warning of how the way of the flesh couldn't satisfy. Solomon said all this with an eye on himself. He preached it to others, he felt deeply the truth of it, but he saw no personal way out of it. All he had was the accurate knowledge of his situation, but no real motivation to change- like the alcoholic or drug abuser who knows every aspect of the harm of his habit.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/7-5-8The_Mind_Of_Solomon.htm

Ez. 45

The idea that some prophecies are more command than prediction helps make sense of the prophecy of Ez. 40-48. When we read "my princes shall no more oppress my people...the shekel shall be twenty gerahs...ye shall offer an oblation" (Ez. 45:8,12,13), the emphasis needs to be placed upon the word "shall". This was a command to the elders of the people-made explicit in passages like Ez. 45:9: "Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil...ye shall have just balances". By failing to be obedient, God's people effectively disallowed the fulfilment of the 'prophecy' that could have come true if they had been obedient to it. And the same is so for us today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-3Command_More_Than_Prediction.htm

Jn. 12

Rom. 10:9,10 stresses that belief *and* confession are necessary for salvation. This may be one of the many links between Romans and John's gospel, in that Jn. 12:42 speaks of those who believed but wouldn't confess. Confession, a public showing forth of our belief, is vital if we are to be saved. It's perhaps worth noting that baptisms tend often to be attended largely by believers, and be performed indoors, e.g. in a bath at someone's home, or a church hall. It's quite possible to learn the Gospel, be baptized- and nobody out in this world ever know. It's down to us to ensure this isn't true in our case.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

October 20

2 Chron. 12, 13 The confession of the Name is paralleled with repentance in 2 Chron. 6:24. There we read that if Israel sin and repent "and confess thy name" they will be forgiven. But instead of "confess thy name" we expect "confess their sins: the point being that to confess the name is effectively to confess sins. The name is the characteristics of Yahweh. The more we meditate upon them, the more we will naturally be lead to a confession of our sins, the deeper we will sense the gap between those principles and our own character. Likewise in 2 Chron. 12:6 the statement that "the Lord is righteous" is effectively a confession of sin. And thus we are not to bear or take the Name of Yahweh called upon us at baptism in vain- the reality of the implications of the name are not to be lost upon us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Ez. 46

There are problems in thinking that "the prince" is the Lord Jesus. A priest must make an offering for this "prince", and he offers a bullock for himself as a sin offering, which the priest offers. This surely shouts out against an application to the Lord Jesus. He is subject to death (Ez. 46:17,18); and has a wife and sons (Ez. 46:16) who will succeed him (Ez. 45:8). All this is surely a prophecy of a Messiah-figure who could have arisen at the restoration. So much was made possible, God worked out the finest details- but Judah were too selfish to realize the great potential God had arranged. Today, God may well have arranged wonderful things, in great detail, for us to go out and fulfill- if we are willing.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-1Ezekiel_And_Solomons_Temple.htm

Jn. 13, 14

'Abiding' is a major theme in John. Several times he records how the Lord Jesus 'abode' in houses or areas during His ministry (Jn. 1:38,39; 2:12; 4:40; 7:9; 10:40; 11:6), culminating in the Lord's words that He was still abiding with them, but would leave them soon (Jn. 14:25). And yet the repeated teaching of the Lord is that actually, He will permanently abide in the heart of whoever believes in Him. And all the stories of Him 'abiding' a night here or there prepare the way for this. Those hearts become like the humble homes of Palestine where He spent odd nights- the difference being that there is now a permanent quality to that 'abiding', "for ever". This is how close and real the Lord can come to us, if His words truly abide in us. So why not try to learn at least part of a Gospel? But above all, to let the word of Christ

dwell in us richly, affecting our very core values and every aspect of human character, perception and sensitivity.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

October 21

2 Chron. 14, 15

Asa in his better days did not ask God to rush in and help, when he was faced with the crisis of the Ethiopian invasion. He showed his faith in the principles of God's knowledge: " Lord, it is nothing for thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us" (2 Chron. 14:11). There is no bleating on about the actual problem, rather does most of the prayer focus on reciting, in real faith, the characteristics of God. Coming down to earth, " Make the car start! Make the car start!" will give way, in spiritual maturity, to a praiseful recounting of God's character, with almost an incidental mention of the overbearing situation we are up against. We will request in spirit, but without making this explicit.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Ez. 47

This chapter sounds far more appropriate to the situation at the time of the restoration, with the Samaritans living in the land, than to the Millennium. "Strangers" who have settled in the land (Ez. 47:22,23) surely refer to God's willingness to give the Samaritans who then lived in the land a place in the Kingdom which potentially could then have been established. "The people of the land" were to have a part in the new system of things (Ez. 45:16,22; 46:3,9), and yet this very phrase is repeatedly used concerning the Samaritan people who lived in the land at the time of the restoration (Ezra 4:4; 10:2,11; Neh. 9:24; 10:30,31). God's intention was that they should eventually be converted unto Him; it was His intention that Ezekiel's temple be built at the time of the restoration under Ezra. And yet Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5 criticize the Jews who returned and built the temple for continuing to oppress the stranger / Gentile. Israel would not. Is. 56:6 defines what is meant by "a house of prayer for all nations"- it is for those of all nations who "join themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love the name of the Lord...every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and *taketh hold of my covenant*".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-1Ezekiel_And_Solomons_Temple.htm

Jn. 15, 16

"These things have I written unto you...that ye may know that ye have eternal life...and this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1 Jn. 5:13,14). Answered prayer is the confidence that we have eternal life. Answered prayer means that our joy will be full (Jn. 16:24).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_2.htm

October 22

2 Chron. 16, 17

The whole way of life of the righteous man is described as seeking God, knowing we will eventually find Him when the Lord returns to change our natures (2 Chron. 15:2). So many times does David parallel those who seek God with those who keep His word (e.g. Ps. 119:2). We will never achieve perfect obedience; but seeking it is paralleled with it. We are coming to *know* the love of Christ which passes our natural knowledge (Eph. 3:19), to experience the peace of God that passes our natural understanding (Phil. 4:7). We are asked to be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect (Mt. 5:48); to have the faith of God (Mk. 11:22 AVmg.). By faith in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, we can attain these heights; but not in our own strength. In our every spiritual struggle and victory against the flesh throughout the day, we are playing out the finest and highest heroism that any playwright could conceive: the absolute underdog, the outsider without a chance, winning, at the end, the ultimate victory against impossible odds.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

Ez. 48

Mic. 2:9 clearly states that God would “take away my glory for ever”; yet Ez. 48 and other passages picture the glory of God returning to the temple from which it had departed. One can find these kinds of things all over the Bible. They are profound witnesses to the depth of God’s passion for us. We live in a passionless age. Within our community, there’s a culture of well-speak arising, which masks a legalism and disregard of the person and the individual. The well-speak culture whilst of course good in a sense, leads to a community and people lacking in any passion, obsessed with keeping a status quo, and that will never grow. Judging *how* something is said / presented rather than **WHAT** is said or done appears typical of what is the case in the world at large. Passion, emotion, genuine feeling, hot blood, are all somewhat despised. But these are very clearly the character traits of the God in whose image we seek to be.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3-1The_Love_Of_God_In_Hosea.htm

Jn. 17, 18

Like Peter, Judas likewise “went out” into the darkness. Judas is described as “standing with” those who ultimately crucified Jesus in Jn 18:5. Interestingly the same idea occurs in Jn. 18:18 where Peter is described as standing with essentially the same group; point being, that Judas and Peter in essence did the same thing, they both denied their Lord and stood with His enemies. But one repented real repentance, whereas the other couldn’t muster the faith for this. Lesson: We all deny the Lord, but the two paths before us are those of either Peter or Judas. Peter of course is our pattern.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-1-3Peters_Conversion.htm

October 23

2 Chron. 18, 19

The more we begin to even faintly grasp the height of Yahweh's holiness and spirituality, the more we will be awed by His humility in dealing with us. It requires humility from Him to even behold the Angels (Ps. 113:6). And yet He lets them discuss His will and come up with their own schemes for executing it, many of which he rejects as somehow inappropriate (2 Chron. 18:17-20). The way God does not issue directives and expect robot-like execution of them, the way He suspends or changes His plans in accordance with human response, the way He sometimes allows men to live on a lower level than the ideal levels which He teaches- the depth of His humility is hard to plumb. And if *He* is humble- what about us?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-5The_Humility_Of_God.htm

Dan 1

Rev. 2:10 exhorts us to be " faithful unto death" . The prison tribulation would be for " ten days...and I will give unto thee a crown" . This points back to Daniel's 'trial' of ten days (Dan. 1:12), and his later going into prison and emerging to receive a crown. Daniel's 'devil' was Arab Babylon, and the 'devil' of Rev. 2:10 refers to a like power in the last days. The idea of ten days of affliction suggests the 10 days of self-examination and affliction of souls before the day of Atonement- as if the purpose of the holocaust is to evoke self-examination and repentance in preparation for the High Priest's appearing on the Day of Atonement.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/25.htm>

Jn. 19

I can only ponder the use of the imperfect in Jn. 19:25: 'There were standing' *may* imply that Mary and the women came and went; sometimes they were there by the cross, sometimes afar off. Did they retreat from grief, or from a sense of their inadequacy, or from being driven off by the hostile crowd or soldiers, only to make their way stubbornly back? Tacitus records that no spectators of a crucifixion were allowed to show any sign of grief; this was taken as a sign of compliance with the sin of the victim. He records how some were even crucified for showing grief at a crucifixion. This was especially so in the context of leaders of revolutionary movements, which was the reason why Jesus was crucified. This would explain why the women stood afar off, and sometimes in moments of self-control came closer. Thus the Lord looked for comforters and found none, according to the spirit of prophecy in the Psalms. And yet His mother was also at the foot of the cross sometimes. For her to be there, so close to Him as she undoubtedly wished to be, and yet not to show emotion, appearing to the world to be another indifferent spectator; the torture of mind must be meditated upon. Any of these scenarios provides a link with the experience of all who would walk out against the wind of this world, and identify ourselves with the apparently hopeless cause of the crucified Christ. The RV of Jn. 19:25 brings out the tension between the soldiers standing there, and the fact that: "But there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother...". The "but..." signals, perhaps, the tension of the situation- for it was illegal to stand in sympathy by the cross of the victim. And there the soldiers were, specially in place to stop it happening, standing nearby...

John taking Mary to his own home *may* not mean that he took her away to his house in Jerusalem. In any case, John's physical home was in Galilee, not Jerusalem. " His own (home)" is used elsewhere to mean 'family' rather than a physical house. This would have

involved Mary rejecting her other sons, and entering into John's family. Spiritual ties were to be closer than all other. This must be a powerful lesson, for it was taught in the Lord's final moments. Whether we understand that John took Mary away to his own home (and later returned, Jn. 19:35), or that they both remained there to the end with the understanding that Mary was not now in the family of Jesus, the point is that the Lord separated Himself from His mother. The fact He did this last was a sign of how close He felt to her. She was the last aspect of His humanity which He had clung to. And at the bitter bitter end, He knew that He must let go even, even, even of her. Jn. 19:28 speaks likewise as if the Lord's relationship with His mother was the last part of His humanity which He had to complete / fulfil / finish. For it was "after this", i.e. His words to His mother, that He knew that "all was now finished".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-9Woman_Behold_Thy_Son.htm

October 24

2 Chron. 20

Israel never really wholeheartedly committed themselves to Yahweh, and yet 2 Chron. 20:33 positively and hopefully says: " *As yet* the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers" . They never did. Especially in the preaching of the word of salvation to those who they knew wouldn't respond, the Father and Son show their hopeful spirit. Their positive spirit should be ours.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15-4The_Hopefulness_Of_God.htm

Dan 2

Those who had asked the King for more time before telling him his dream, had been given the death sentence; and yet knowing this, Daniel asks for more time- so that he can pray seriously for the answer (Dan. 2:8,16). He must have been tempted to just say a quick prayer; but he knew that real prayer is not merely an emotional outburst fuelled by the self-preservation instinct. This is a fine challenge to our excuses that we don't have or don't need much time to pray.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3.htm>

Jn. 20, 21

There's a rather nice indicator of the Lord's conscious effort to show His 'humanity' even after His resurrection. It's in the way the risen Lord calls out to the disciples at the lake, calling them "lads" (Jn. 21:5). The Greek *paidion* is the plural familiar form of the noun *pais*, 'boy'. Raymond Brown comments that the term "has a colloquial touch...[as] we might say 'My boys' or 'lads' if calling to a knot of strangers of a lower social class". Why use this colloquial term straight after His resurrection, something akin to 'Hey guys!', when this was not His usual way of addressing them? Surely it was to underline to them that things hadn't changed in one sense, even if they had in others; He was still the same Jesus. The Lord was recognized by the Emmaus disciples in the way that He broke the bread. How He broke a loaf of bread open with His hands *after* His resurrection reflected the same basic style and mannerism which He had employed *before* His death. Not only the body language but the Lord's choice of words and expressions was similar both before and after His passion. He

uses the question " Whom are you looking for?" at the beginning of His ministry (Jn. 1:38), just before His death (Jn. 18:4) and also after His resurrection (Jn. 20:15). And the words of the risen Lord as recorded in Revelation are shot through with allusion to the words He used in His mortal life, as also recorded by John. Significantly, both Luke and John conclude their Gospels with the risen Lord walking along with the disciples, and them 'following' Him (Jn. 21:20)- just as they had done during His ministry. His invitation to 'Follow me' (Jn. 21:19,22) is the very language He had used whilst He was still mortal (Jn. 1:37,43; 10:27; 12:26; Mk. 1:18; 2:14). The point being, that although He was now different, in another sense, He still related to them as He did when He was mortal, walking the lanes and streets of 1st century Palestine.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-19.htm>

October 25

2 Chron. 21, 22

The harsh treatment of the Ammonites, torturing them under harrows, is indication enough of David's bad conscience before God being shown in his harsh treatment of others. Likewise Asa oppressed the people when he was guilty in his conscience (2 Chron. 16:10). And the wicked Kings of Israel usually died "without being desired" by their people, presumably because their broken relationship with God had led to a broken relationship between them and their brethren (e.g. 2 Chron. 21:20). By contrast a good relationship with God will be reflected in bonding with our brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/6-4-4Davids_Repentance.htm

Dan 3

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were examples of selflessness. They told Nebuchadnezzar that they were confident that Yahweh would save them from the furnace. " But even if He does not, we want you to know, O King, that we will not serve your gods" (Dan. 3:18 NIV). Even if God didn't preserve them, they would still serve Him alone. Perhaps they had Job's words going round in their minds: " Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" .

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-4-2Examples_Of_Selflessness.htm

Acts 1

The Lord Jesus Christ is the same today as He was yesterday. The Jesus of history is the Christ of faith. The *same* Jesus who went into Heaven will *so* come again *in like manner* (Acts 1:11). The record three times says the same thing. The "like manner" in which the Lord will return doesn't necessarily refer to the way He gradually ascended up in to the sky, in full view of the gazing disciples. He was to return in the "like manner" to what they had seen. Yet neither those disciples nor the majority of the Lord's people will literally see Him descending through the clouds at His return- for they will be dead. But we will 'see' Him at His return "in like manner" as He was when on earth. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. The Jesus who loved little children and wept over Jerusalem's self-

righteous religious leaders, so desirous of their salvation, is the One who today mediates our prayers and tomorrow will confront us at judgment day.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-19.htm>

October 26

2 Chron. 23

The issue of fellowship is an especially vexing Bible paradox. We are commanded that we must preserve the unity of the one body of Christ, and fellowship within it. Yet to fellowship with error is serious indeed; Israel were condemned because they allowed those outside the covenant to partake of the sacrifices which symbolised their covenant with God (cp. the breaking of bread; 2 Chron. 23:19; Is. 26:2; Ez. 44:7 cp. Rev. 22:14). The problem is that we can't tell who exactly is in the body of Christ. It cannot be denied that we must separate from that which is false. The Gospel is fundamentally a call to separation, a deliverance from what is false, as Israel were delivered from Egypt. In some sense, our redemption, our eternal destiny, depends upon this. Yet our salvation also depends upon showing the softness, the love, the patience, which we will stand in need of at the judgment. For as we judge, so will we be judged. The attitude of the Lord Jesus towards us in that day will be proportionate to our attitude towards our brethren in this brief life. But perhaps the 'contradiction' is there to teach us - or try to teach us- the need for us to rise up to the challenge of showing " grace and truth" in our thinking and judging, even though we cannot fully achieve it; to realize our tragic inability in this, to recognize that within our limited nature this must be an unsolvable paradox. And thereby we should be led to appreciate more the beauty and the wonder of the way in which these two concepts are linked together in the Father and His Son, and to yearn more to perceive and enter into the glory of God's Name, which totally incorporates these two humanly opposed aspects (Ex. 34:6,7; Rom. 11:22).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/6-3Bible_Paradoxes.htm

Dan 4

One part of our message is of the Kingdom of God; we should be living witnesses to the current rulership of God over our lives, and thereby we testify with credibility and integrity to the future establishment of that Kingdom on earth at the Lord's return. If we are living the eternal life, the Kingdom life, then we are in ourselves advertisements for the good news of the Kingdom. Daniel is an example of this. The Aramaic verb *habal* occurs several times in Daniel, and between them we build up a picture of how Daniel was a living witness to the Kingdom. The word means to hurt / destroy. We find that the Kingdom of Babylon was to be cut down and destroyed; whereas the Kingdom of God was to never be destroyed (Dan. 4:23; 2:44). The mouths of the lions were closed so that they did not " hurt" [s.w. 'destroy'] Daniel (Dan. 6:22); and because of this, Darius praises God, saying that His Kingdom would never be 'destroyed' (Dan. 6:26). Daniel was not destroyed; and thus Darius came to believe that God's Kingdom would not be destroyed. Because Daniel was set up as a living part and foretaste of that Kingdom. To a far greater extent, " the Kingdom of God" is a title given to the Lord Jesus- because He in His mortal life was the essence of that Kingdom, the embodiment of the Kingdom life. Are we living lives today that are in essence the Kingdom life? In this sense we "have eternal life".

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1.htm>

Acts 2

When about to drown, Peter our example called out: "Lord, save me" (Mt. 14:30); and He was saved. When he later preached to the crowds, he encouraged them to likewise call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Acts 2:39). He saw himself then and there, in all his weakness and yet sincere desperation, as the epitome of us all. If we appeal to others in terms shot through with reference to our weakness, we will like Peter be irresistably persuasive in our preaching.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-1-2Peter_Our_Example.htm

October 27

2 Chron. 24

"Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (2 Chron. 24:2). But when Jehoiada died, Joash listened to, and was influenced by, the wicked princes of Judah (:17). It is clear that for all his apparent strength of character and zeal for God, Joash was simply a product of those he was with. And so it can be that 21st century mankind, our young people especially, can tend to be people with no real character, their very personalities influenced by others rather than being real, credible people. Insofar as we can break free from all these moulding influences, we will be real, credible persons. And our independence, our realness, is what will attract others to the message of Divine influence which we preach. Those raised in Christian homes need to pay especial attention to the possibility that they are where they are spiritually because of the good influence of others upon them. There is no harm in this; but we need to strive to have a faith that is not merely the faith of our fathers, but a real and personal response to the love of God which we have for ourselves perceived in the man Christ.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/16.htm>

Dan 5

The record reveals that Daniel went through a yo-yo pattern of being promoted into the limelight, and then (in an unrecorded manner) slipping out of the limelight into relative obscurity, from which he was promoted again. Thus in 2:48 Daniel is made Prime Minister, in the events of Chapter 3 he seems to be strangely absent, in 4:8 Daniel is brought in to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's second dream almost as an afterthought, implying he was out of the limelight; by 5:11 King Belshazzar was unaware of Daniel, but promoted him to " third ruler in the Kingdom" (5:29). Daniel was "made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers" by Nebuchadnezzar; but by the time his son was reigning, this had largely been forgotten (Dan. 5:12)- because Daniel evidently was nowhere near that job to which he'd been promoted. Why did Daniel slip out of the limelight? Was it not for the sake of his conscience? As a member of the Jewish community, it would have been so easy for Daniel to stay where he was, reasoning that holding down a job like that would enable him to do so much for the Truth. But he realized that his personal conscience and devotion to the spiritual life must be given number one priority if he was to help his people. There is an

exact correspondence between the mind of Daniel here and the fervent believer who refuses promotion, jumps out of a career that is rubbing too strongly against the conscience... would our community featured more examples of men and women like this.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/10Character_Of_Daniel.htm

Acts 3, 4

We cannot celebrate God's grace / giving to us without response. Because Israel had been redeemed from Egypt, they were to be generous to their brethren, and generally open handed (Lev. 25:37,38). This is why the Acts record juxtaposes God's grace / giving, and the giving of the early believers in response (Acts 4:33 cp. 32,34-37).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-4Forsaking_All_We_Have.htm

October 28

2 Chron. 25

There is one theme that the Bible continually pushes: human beings, including the believers, are incredibly spiritually blind and obtuse when it comes to spiritual things. We just don't see (i.e. understand) what's in black and white. Amaziah, a man not completely without faith and the knowledge of Yahweh, worshipped the gods of Edom whom he had just defeated (2 Chron. 25:19,20). In what ways are we going to be so blind today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-3-1Spiritual_Blindness.htm

Dan 6

Daniel was willing to die in justification of his habit of open, unashamed, regular prayer (Dan. 6:10). Do we have this habit?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3.htm>

Acts 5, 6

The Lord had told the cured leper to tell no other man but go and offer for his cleansing, in order to make a witness to the priests. All three synoptics record this, as if it made a special impression on everyone (Mt. 8:4; Mk. 1:44; Lk. 5:14). It could be that the Lord is using an idiom when He told the leper to tell nobody: 'Go and make a witness *first and foremost* to the priests as opposed to anybody else'. Such was His zeal for their salvation. And the fact that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7) shows how this apparently hope-against-hope desire of the Lord for the conversion of His enemies somehow came true. Our preaching today needs the same ambitious hope in success.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/8.htm>

October 29

2 Chron. 26, 27

If a man prepares his way after God's principles (2 Chron. 27:6; Prov. 4:26), then God will 'prepare' that man's way too (Ps. 37:23; 119:5), confirming him in the way of escape. This process is going on in our lives today.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/a5-3-1.htm>

Dan 7

There is an impressive intensity in Daniel's desire to understand the prophetic word. By all means this needs to be contrasted with a Christendom growing sadly indifferent to the study of latter day prophecy. That prophecy is difficult to interpret and apparently confusing should inspire us to study it more rather than de-motivate us; Daniel was in an even worse expositional dilemma than we are, and yet this very dilemma inspired him even more to want to understand. We need to really soberly consider the force of the descriptions of Daniel's yearning to understand: " My thoughts much troubled me, and my countenance was changed in me: but (i.e. despite the trouble it gave) I kept the matter in my heart" (7:28). This suggests that it would have been easy to allow his inner turmoil to be visibly expressed in his appearance; but he kept the intellectual pain within him. Such deep *pain* at not being able to fully understand the word of prophecy needs to be contrasted with our easy indifference to finding prophecy a closed book. " I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me" (Dan. 7:15) expresses the deep physiological effects of Daniel's lack of understanding. This grief of spirit can be connected with the words of Is. 54:6, describing a woman " forsaken and *grieved in spirit* , and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused" . The same level of spiritual and emotional pain was seen in Daniel. It may be that Daniel felt his lack of understanding was somehow related to his own moral weakness (or that of his people).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/10Character_Of_Daniel.htm

Acts 7

Israel's deliverance through the Red Sea seems to be attributed to Moses' faith (Heb. 11:28,29; Acts 7:36,38). Yet in the actual record, Moses seems to have shared Israel's cry of fear, and was rebuked for this by God (Ex. 14:15,13,10). Yet in the midst of that rebuke, we learn from the New Testament, God perceived the faith latent within Moses, beneath that human fear and panic. God likewise is discerning the faith in us, even masked as it is by public failure; and we should do the same to our brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-3-1Moments_Of_Faith.htm

October 30

2 Chron. 28

One of the many Old Testament quarries for this good Samaritan parable is found in 2 Chron.28:15. Here we read how Israel attacked Judah whilst Judah were apostate, and took them captives. But then they realized their own shortcomings, and the fact that Judah really were their brethren; then they " clothed all that were naked among (he captives taken from Judah), and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho...to their brethren" . Now there is allusion after allusion to this scene in the Samaritan parable. Surely

our Lord had his eye on this incident as he devised that parable. The point he was making as surely this: 'In trying to follow my example of total love for your brethren, your spiritual neighbours, remember your own shortcomings, and what the Lord has done for you by His grace; and then go and reflect this to your brethren'. The opportunities in our days for expressing this love of our brethren, with all our mind and strength, are just so numerous. Letter writing, preaching, organizing meetings, visits, above all fervent prayer for their salvation. If we are really pouring out all our heart and soul into the salvation of our brethren, after the pattern of Christ on the cross, our worldly careers will mean so little, our every practical decision will be coloured by our commitments to the body of Christ; where and how we live, what hours we work, hobbies (if any!), holidays (if any!)... our very soul, every aspect of our life, must be affected by our loving our neighbour, and thereby our God, with our whole soul and mind and physical strength.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a3-1The_Good_Samaritan.htm

Dan 8

Dan. 8:15 records Daniel seeking to understand the meaning of a vision; but two verses earlier, an Angel had asked another Angel for understanding of the same vision. Here surely we have the practical meaning, in Angelic terms, of God knowing our prayers and arranging the answers before we even ask them. Perhaps it was Daniel's guardian Angel who asked a more senior Angel for the interpretation of the vision, knowing Daniel was going to be asking for it. Yet it was the second Angel who actually gave the answer to Daniel (Dan. 8:14). Verse 16 describes the one Angel standing at the Ulai river calling out: "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision". Yet at this time, Daniel himself was in vision at the Ulai river (:2). His guardian Angel was there, right in front of him. And He had foreknown Daniel's feelings and arranged for another Angel to respond to them...and so the second Angel (Gabriel) also comes near where Daniel was standing (:17). His guardian Angel had literally called Gabriel to come over to Daniel... And all this is going on for you and me *hourly* in the court of Heaven! There's another example of this in Dan. 12. There are two Angels with Daniel by the river (:2). One of them asks the other: "How long shall it be to the end...?" (:6; cp. 8:13). Yet this was exactly the spirit of Daniel! And then the other Angel gives *Daniel* the answer. His guardian Angel knew his unexpressed questions and desires, and passed them on to another Angel to answer. This is the kind of thing going on when we pray!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels7_5.htm

Acts 8

Paul's progressive appreciation of his own sinfulness is reflected in how he describes what he did in persecuting Christians in ever more terrible terms, the older he gets. He describes his victims as "men and women" whom he 'arrested' (Acts 8:3; 22:4), then he admits he threatened and murdered them (Acts 9:3), then he persecuted "the way" unto death (Acts 22:4); then he speaks of them as "those who believe" (Acts 22:19) and finally, in a crescendo of shame with himself, he speaks of how he furiously persecuted, like a wild animal, unto the death, "many of the saints", not only in Palestine but also "to foreign [Gentile] cities" (Acts 26:10,11). He came to appreciate his brethren the more, as he came to realize the more his own sinfulness. And this is surely a pattern for us all.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-4Saul_Changed_To_Paul.htm

October 31

2 Chron. 29

Realizing that what we appear to own in life is not actually ours but God's brings with it a great sense of freedom. No longer is there the endless anxiety about what is 'ours', and the need to keep it for ourselves. Indeed, the Hebrew word translated "free" is also that translated "liberal" or "generous". Hence in 2 Chron. 29:31 we find that "as many as were of a free heart [offered] burnt offerings". Actually that Hebrew word is usually translated "prince", the idea being that princes were wealthy enough to be 'free' and therefore generous if they wished. But *any* of us can have this noble / free heart, we can act like wealthy people whatever our poverty, in that we are free from the ties of materialism which bind so tightly.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/24Funding_Mission_Work.htm

Dan 9

Prayer is a sacrifice; it demands effort. The Jews prayed the afternoon prayer at 3p.m., when the sacrifices were being offered, to make this connection between prayer and sacrifice. Both Ezra (Ezra 9:5) and Daniel (Dan. 9:21) prayed at the time of the evening sacrifice. Clearly enough, prayer isn't something we just do half-heartedly, nor as a mindless duty, nor half asleep at night...it's a sacrifice.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-9how_to_improve_prayer.htm

Acts 9

It is no mere pointless repetition that results in Luke recording Paul's conversion three times in Acts (Acts 9,22,26). Paul saw in his conversion a pattern for all those who would afterwards believe (1 Tim. 1:16). Having said that he was "chief" of the tribe of sinners, Paul goes straight on to say that this "was so that in me *as chief* might Jesus Christ shew forth *all* his longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should later believe on him" (1 Tim. 1:15,16 RV). This sounds as if Paul realized that he was being set up as the chief, supreme example to us; a template for each of us, of forgiveness and zealous response to that forgiveness. Thus Paul's description of how the light of the glory of God in Christ shines in the heart of the new convert (2 Cor. 4:6) was not without reference back to his own Damascus road conversion (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13). Are we following Paul's example today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-1Conversion_Of_Paul.htm

November

1 Nov

2 Chr 30

When the priests in Hezekiah's time blessed the people, " their prayer came up to (God), even unto heaven" (2 Chron. 30:27). But the blessing of the people was not a prayer to God, but words spoken by the priests to the people: " (May) The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee..." (Num. 6:24,25). Yet God saw these words of the priests as a prayer. It's rather like us saying 'God bless you' to a brother as we leave his house; God may read this as a prayer, and do something about it. But this isn't how *we* conceive of prayer.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2.htm>

Dan 10

Reading through Daniel it is evident that we are being invited to try to enter into the character of Daniel. Our fascination with the prophecies can result in us failing to realize that a lot of information is being given about his character. Daniel always seems to me to be portrayed as actually part of the prophecies he gave; he was no fax machine just relaying God's words. He seems to be presented as representative of all those of later times who would hear the word of prophecy. It is for this reason that we are given so much insight into his character. For example, Daniel's spirit of " How long...?" is so exactly reflective of the attitude of all God's children down the years that it is hard to deny that Daniel is being framed as the representative of all the saints. Indeed, these very words are quoted in Rev. 6:10 concerning the attitude of the slain saints of the last days. Daniel's representative role is most clearly shown in the figurative death, resurrection and judgment which he receives in Dan. 10. In this Daniel is acting out the experience of each of the approved. His refusal to obey the command to worship Babylon's King is alluded to in Rev. 13:5; 14:9, which prophesy how the saints of the last days will be tested just as Daniel was, with a like miraculous deliverance. Thus Daniel seems to especially symbolize the latter day believers. The comforting " Fear not Daniel" (Dan. 10:12,19) slots in to many other instances of Angels saying these words to frightened men. Fear was part of the character of Daniel. This makes it appropriate to speculate that the latter day believers will hear the same words from the Angel who comes to gather them (and cp. Is. 35:4, which gives the same " fear not" message to the generation which sees the second coming). Again, Daniel's relationship with the Angel appears to be representative of that enjoyed by all the saints.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/10Character_Of_Daniel.htm

Acts 10

The way Peter prays at 12 noon (Acts 10:9), and how Paul urges us to pray *all the time* (Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2) are therefore radical departures from the concept of praying at set times, three times / day. How radically different is our approach to prayer compared to the 'religious' folk around us?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-6.htm>

2 Nov

2 Chr 31

Israel were told to " throw down" , " break in pieces" and " utterly destroy" the idols and altars of Canaan. There were times during their history when they obeyed this command by

purging themselves from their apostasy in this. The Hebrew words used scarcely occur elsewhere, except very frequently in the context of how God "broke down", "threw down" and "destroyed" Israel at the hands of their Babylonian and Assyrian invaders as a result of their not 'breaking down' (etc.) the idols. "Throw down" in Ex. 34:13; Dt. 7:5; 12:3; 2 Chron. 31:1 is the same word in 2 Chron. 36:19; Jer. 4:26; 31:28; 33:4; 39:8; 52:14; Ez. 16:39; Nah. 1:6. "Cut down" in Dt. 7:5; 12:3; 2 Chron. 31:1 later occurs in Is. 10:33; Jer. 48:25; Lam. 2:3. So Israel faced the choice: either cut down your idols, or you will be cut down. The stone will either fall on us and destroy us, or we must fall on it and become broken men and women (Mt. 21:44).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-9The_Logic_Of_Endurance.htm

Dan 11

Both the prototype in Hezekiah's time and the descriptions in Dan. 11 and Ez. 38 require there to be a personal leader of the northern invasion. Rabshakeh and latter day Sennacherib equate with Daniel's "King (not 'power') of the north", and Ezekiel 38's specific reference to a "rosh" [might one, chief prince] and use of the personal pronoun "thee": "turn thee back. . . thy jaws. . . thine army. . . be thou prepared. . . thy company" etc. All this emphasis needs some explanation. If the prototype of latter day Sennacherib Rabshakeh is to be closely followed, this individual need not be a nation, but a young, headstrong, powerful army commander that mirrors Rabshakeh. To make the clues more exciting, remember that Rabshakeh was probably an apostate Jew (note his references to the covenant name, and evident knowledge of conditions inside Jerusalem). "The man of sin" that is to sit in the temple of God in the last days would seem to have reference back to the "abomination that maketh desolate" and to the planting of the king of the north's tabernacles "between the seas in the glorious holy mountain"- i. e. in the temple area of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45). This "man of sin" points to an individual. Can you see him developing?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels14_4.htm

Acts 11, 12

The believers in Acts 12 gathered together to hold a prayer meeting for Peter's release. Their prayers were answered; he stood outside, knocking on the door. But they simply didn't believe it. They couldn't conceive their prayer was answered. They mocked poor Rhoda and told her to go back and watch the door and not disturb them any more while they prayed for Peter's release. And having mocked her, they got back on their knees and asked again for his release. We can pray, in faith apparently, but with no very deep faith that the answer in actual reality will happen or may already have been granted. Are our prayer efforts similar?
http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-5real_prayer.htm

3 Nov

2 Chr 32

It seems that Hezekiah lived on a high, high spiritual level prior to his illness and the final invasion. He seems to have been single, and then in his illness he wished for a descendant, and subsequently married the Gentile Hephzibah. However, he didn't render again according to the benefit done to him (2 Chron. 32:25), and was therefore threatened with judgment. In

response to this he humbled himself, and the judgment was postponed. He commented that it was a good deal for him, because he would have peace for the rest of the days of the 15 years which God had given him (2 Kings 20:19). My feeling is that Hezekiah lived the rest of his days acceptable with God, but on a markedly lower level than he had lived his earlier life. There are some other kings who are recorded as having lived acceptable lives to God, although evidently they lived on a lower level than the likes of David.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-4Jephthah's_Vow_Principle.htm

Dan 12

Even in the Millennium, the basis of our witness to the world will be that we are in Christ. Thus Micah's description of how "the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass" (Mic. 5:7) is consciously alluding to the then-famous Messianic prophecy of Ps. 72:6: "*He* shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth". The blessings Messiah brings are to be articulated through the witness of those in Him. Those who have lived in Him will then shine as the brightness of the firmament (Dan. 12:3). But the description of the Lord's face shining as the sun draws on this; as if to say that our shining in the future Kingdom will be because we were and are in Him. We will shine forth then (Mt. 13:43), as the Sun of righteousness Himself.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/3-6proof_of_the_resurrection.htm

Acts 13

As in our own community, this tension between right and left manifested itself in many ways. There were dirty politics in the church. The Greek speaking Jews and the Hebrew speaking Jews within the ecclesia started arguing over welfare payments in Acts 6. It was the old tension- the liberals against the orthodox, with the orthodox unwilling to give much of the welfare collection to those they perceived as more liberal. This squabble was tackled by Stephen, and the record then goes on to describe his murder, almost implying that it was Judaist Christians within the synagogues who set him up for this. After all, there was big money involved- Jews were used to paying 10 or 20% of their wealth to the temple, and if this was now going to the ecclesia, with thousands baptized, there could well have arisen a power struggle over who controlled it. It could well be that the division between Paul and John Mark was over this matter; after they had baptized the first Gentile in Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, John Mark went back to the Jerusalem ecclesia (Acts 13:13). Acts 15:38 RV speaks of how he "withdrew from them from Pamphylia", hinting at spiritual reasons for his withdrawal. It must also be remembered that Christianity was a new, unregistered religion in the Roman empire, increasingly subject to persecution and discrimination. Judaism was registered and tolerated. It was so much easier to remain under the synagogue umbrella, to deny the radical demands of the Lord Jesus, and to accept Him half-heartedly, in Name but not in reality.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-2-2Politics_In_The_Church.htm

4 Nov

2 Chr 33

Manasseh's repentance and forgiveness was associated with his knowing Yahweh. He prayed to Yahweh, but only on experiencing forgiveness did he come to know Him (2 Chron. 33:13). To really know the Name elicits forgiveness, and the experience of that forgiveness leads to knowing the Name yet further. Job went through the same; when he truly saw / perceived God, he repented and 'loathed his words' (Job 42:6 RVmg.).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Hos 1

Time and again we are brought to realize that the same external action can be judged by God quite differently, according to our motives. Uzziah was condemned for acting as a priest; when David did the same, he was reflecting his spirituality. God commanded Jehu to perform the massacre of Ahab's family at Jezreel, and blessed him for it (2 Kings 10:10,29,30); and yet Hos. 1:4 condemns the house of Jehu for doing that. Why? Presumably because their later attitude to that act of obedience was wrong, and the act therefore became judged as God as something which brought just punishment on the house of Jehu many years later. Why? Because even an outward act of obedience, when perceived through wrong motives and feelings, becomes an act of sin and a basis even for condemnation. All our works need careful analysis once we grasp this point.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-8Genuine_Motives.htm

Acts 14, 15

We have a conscience which in God's eyes is cleansed of sin, knowing that our sin has been overcome once and for all, and that we have access to this through baptism. Our hearts were purified by that faith (Acts 15:9); we were cleansed from the conscience of sins (Heb. 9:14); all things became pure to us (Tit. 1:15; Rom. 14:20). This is a good conscience, Biblically defined. When Paul said he had a pure conscience before God, they smote him for blasphemy (Acts 23:1,2); there is an association between a clear conscience and perfection (Heb. 9:9; 10:14). A clear conscience therefore means an awareness that in God's eyes, we have no sin. Thus Paul's conscience could tell him that he was living a life which was a response to his experience of God's grace / forgiveness (2 Cor. 1:12). The conscience works not only negatively; it insists that we *do* certain things. It may even be that the goads against which Paul was kicking before his conversion were not the pricks of bad conscience, but rather the *positive* directions from God that he *ought* to be giving his life to the service of His Son. Whilst we may still have twinges of guilt, and sins to confess, from God's viewpoint the slate is clean, and has been since our baptism. It is impossible to believe this without some kind of response.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-3A_Good_Conscience.htm

5 Nov

2 Chr 34

There is an OT background to the Lord's invitation to follow Him in the taking up of the cross and following to the place of crucifixion. It is in the frequent references to the faithful following after Yahweh Himself (e.g. Dt. 7:4; 2 Chron. 34:33). It's as if the Lord was saying

that the essence of Yahweh was in the cross He carried. To follow Him to the end, to live the life of cross carrying, leads us to Yahweh Himself.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/12.htm>

Hos 2

That the extent of God's anger arises from the degree of His love is perhaps reflected in the way the Hebrew words for "lover" and "hater" are so closely related- *oheb* and *oyeb*. Hos. 2:9 appears to make a word play based around this. The gravity and emotional enormity of each 'side' of the total equation, the huge tension of the equilibrium that keeps them in perfect balance in God's character and words, was reflected in the prophets personally; and it will be in us too. The result of this is that the anger of both God and His prophets becomes understandable as more an expression of His and their sorrow, the hurtiness of their love, even their weariness. God says that He has "had enough" of Israel, even saying "I am weary to bear" them (Is. 1:11-15). Is. 43:24 specifically speaks of God's weariness with His people- and this too was part of the prophets' spirit. And yet shining through all that is God's hopefulness for His people, and His grace: "The Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore will He exalt Himself [in judgment] to show mercy to you" (Is. 30:18). This wasn't an angry God hitting back at a rebellious people; this is the God of Israel looking at judgment only as a way to reveal His grace and mercy in the longer term.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Acts 16, 17

Appreciating the height of who Jesus was and is, clearly motivated his preaching. And it should ours too. This is why Paul in the face of every discouragement could preach that "there *is* another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7). This was the core of his message; not only that there *will be* a coming King in Jerusalem, but that there *is* right now a King at God's right hand, who demands our total allegiance. The Acts record associates the height of Jesus with a call to repentance too. This is the message of Is. 55:6-9- *because* God's thoughts are so far higher than ours, *therefore* call upon the Lord whilst He is near, and let the wicked forsake his way. Because the Father and Son who are so high above us morally and physically are willing to deal with us, *therefore* we ought to seize upon their grace and repent.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-25Jesus_Is_Lord.htm

6 Nov

2 Chr 35

Later references to the Passover show that burnt offerings were offered by the worshippers as well; it seems that the lambs had the skin flayed off them (2 Chron. 35:11), in uncanny prophecy of the Lord's scourging. His sufferings shouldn't leave us feeling passive; surely we have to respond to Him there, and respond today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-1passover_and_breaking_of_bread.htm

Hos 3

Gomer's sexual addiction is testified to by the way Hosea orders that even after their re-marriage, she would "wait" for him, and "not belong to a man" (Hos. 3:3), i.e. they would not have intercourse. Hos. 4:18 speaks of how "they have made love continually... her lustful spirit". The judgment of removing the signs of adultery from Gomer's face and from between her breasts (Hos. 2:4) also give a window into the level of her sexual addiction. Song 1:13 speaks of myrrh between the breasts being used as an aphrodisiac; and prostitutes paint their faces in Jer. 4:30 and Ez. 23:40. She wore a nose ring and pendant in order to 'go after' her lovers (Hos. 2:15). And yet these things would've been understood as wedding gifts, akin to a woman today wearing a wedding ring. The awful thing is that she used the very things Hosea had given her as an expression of his unique commitment to her- as a means for adultery. Likewise the silver and gold of her dowry, she used in Baal worship (Hos. 2:10). She wasn't doing it for money or because she was in need; the implication is that she was using the aphrodisiac to excite and sexually stimulate herself rather than her lovers, and was *therefore* going in search of them. We have to ask what wilful stimulations to sin, to unfaithfulness to our Master, we allow into our lives.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-5-1extent_of_grace.htm

Acts 18, 19

Paul preached in Ephesus from 11a.m. to 4 p.m. (Acts 19:9 Western text)- the siesta period. Whilst working with his own hands to support himself, he somehow persuaded men and women to break their usual sleep pattern to come and hear him. F.F. Bruce has commented that more Ephesians were awake at 1a.m. than 1 p.m. His zeal is amazing- and is our pattern. http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-3power_of_preaching.htm

7 Nov

2 Chr 36

The prophets "spoke from the mouth of Yahweh" Himself; and yet the people scoffed at them (2 Chron. 36:12,16 RV). The power of inspiration was and is so great; and to not heed God's word today is therefore a personal affront to Him.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-1.htm>

Hos 4

Our part in the promises should enable us to live Godly in this present evil world. Ps. 89:1-3 records David breaking forth into joy simply because of the promises made to him. Although Israel were in covenant relationship with God, there was no "truth nor mercy nor knowledge of God in the land", but rather the very opposite: swearing, lying etc. (Hos. 4:1,2). If they had truly believed the "mercy and truth" of the promises to Abraham and the covenant based around them, they would have been merciful and truthful. But they knew these promises but didn't believe them.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Acts 20

J.I. Packer has written: "Paul sought to save men; and because he sought to save them, he was

not content merely to throw truth at them; but he went out of his way to get alongside them, and to start thinking with them from where they were, and to speak to them in terms that they could understand, and above all to avoid anything that would prejudice them against the Gospel...in his zeal to maintain truth he never lost sight of the needs and claims of people". A cameo of his attitude is presented when Eutychus falls down from the window; Paul likewise runs down afterwards and falls on him, on the blood and broken bones (Acts 20:9,10). The language of Paul's descent and falling upon Eutychus and Eutychus' own fall from the window are so similar. Surely the point is, that Paul had a heart that bled for that man, that led him to identify with him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

8 Nov

Ezra 1, 2

Those who decided to obey God's command and leave Babylon were confirmed in this by God: He raised up their spirit *to want* to return and re-build Jerusalem, and He touched the heart of Cyrus to make decrees which greatly helped them to do this (Ezra 1:2-5). And so the same Lord God of Israel is waiting to confirm us in our every act of separation from this world, great or small; and He waits not only to receive us, but to be a Father unto us, and to make us His sons and daughters (2 Cor. 6:18).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/1-6-4Worlds_In_Collision.htm

Hos 5

Hosea's reference to *daath elohim*, the knowledge of God, has been observed as strikingly intimate, hinting as it does of God 'knowing' His people and them knowing Him, in the same way as a man 'knows' a woman. Hence the utter pain of Hos. 5:4: "The spirit of harlotry is within them, and they know not [i.e. sexually] *the Lord*" - although they 'knew' so many others, they were sexually obsessed. This was God's pain, lived out by Hosea. It was that very "knowledge of God" which He desired, rather than burnt offerings (Hos. 6:6). And we today have the possibility to hurt God this much, too.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-2.htm>

Acts 21, 22

Paul's progressive appreciation of his own sinfulness is reflected in how he describes what he did in persecuting Christians in ever more terrible terms, the older he gets. He describes his victims as "men and women" whom he 'arrested' (Acts 8:3; 22:4), then he admits he threatened and murdered them (Acts 9:3), then he persecuted "the way" unto death (Acts 22:4); then he speaks of them as "those who believe" (Acts 22:19) and finally, in a crescendo of shame with himself, he speaks of how he furiously persecuted, like a wild animal, unto the death, "many of the saints", not only in Palestine but also "to foreign [Gentile] cities" (Acts 26:10,11). He came to appreciate his brethren the more, as he came to realize the more his own sinfulness. And this is surely a pattern for us all.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-4Saul_Changed_To_Paul.htm

9 Nov

Ezra 3, 4

Haggai's prophecy can be dated quite precisely- it was given August-September 520 BC. This was harvest time. And at this very labour intensive season, where all hands had to be on deck out in the fields, the prophet called for a dedication of labour to building up God's house. Yet Judah were too concerned with their own harvests than the harvest of God's glory. They were asked to do something counter-instinctive- to take time out from harvest, and spend that time on building up God's house. And they failed the challenge. But it wasn't that they were simply lazy. Hag. 1:8, a prophecy given 18 years after the decree of Cyrus, orders the people to go up into the hills of Judah and get wood with which to build the temple. And yet according to Ezra 3:7, the decree of Cyrus 18 years earlier had resulted in cedar wood being brought from Tyre and Sidon, enough for the temple to be built. Where had the wood gone? Is the implication not that the leadership had used it for their own "ciled houses" (Hag. 1:4)? It all seems so petty minded. But this is what we are tempted to do, time and again- build up our own house and leave God's house desolate and in a very poor second place.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_Of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

Hos 6

Israel had come to perceive of Yahweh as a god like the gods of the other nations and tribes around them. The prophets consciously brought home the fact that He is unique, and *not* at all like any local pagan deity. The pagan gods were thought to punish their people for minor infringements of ritual, or simply because deities were cruel at times. Yahweh wasn't like that; His judgments came only after passionate pleading, after being deferred time and again, and even then, they came in order to bring about correction, as a purging (Is. 1:25,26 and often), and not as an expression of irritation or mere anger of a capricious, unstable deity. "He has torn, that He may heal us" (Hos. 6:1). Amos speaks of Israel's final judgment as a day of their meeting their God, and he urges them to prepare to meet Him (Am. 4:12). This was no grim fatalism, an angry final statement. The language is shot through with allusion to how both Israel and Moses were told to prepare to meet Yahweh at Sinai (Ex. 19:11,15; 34:2). But that meeting involved a declaration of God's Name, the foremost characteristic of which was that God is a God *full* of mercy and love for His people.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-2.htm>

Acts 23, 24

Paul's claim to have a conscience 'void of offence' (24:16) could surely only have been true because he really believed that his sins had been forgiven, to the point that he felt clear in his conscience about them.

10 Nov

Ezra 5, 6

It could be pointed out that the temple which Cyrus commanded the Jews to build in Jerusalem was of different (smaller) dimensions to that of Ezekiel (Ezra 6:3,4). Two possibilities arise here. Either Israel chose to listen to the words of man rather than those of God through Ezekiel; or (more likely) God reduced the dimensions, knowing that this was within the capability of Israel to achieve. In any case, Israel were encouraged by Divine prophesy in the work of building according to the pattern which Cyrus had given (Ezra 6:14). God is so eager to work with men that He will work with us on our lower level, even if it is a level lower than what we are capable of. And so we should treat our weaker brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-4Contemporary_Relevance_Of_Ezekiels_Temple.htm

Hos 7

Our early morning thoughts are fair indicators of how we really are with God. Interestingly, Israel are criticized for their early morning attitudes- in the mornings they fantasized after their neighbours' wives (Jer. 5:8; Hos. 7:6), got up and wanted to get drunk again (Is. 5:11), had unjust thoughts about others (Jer. 21:12; Mic. 2:1). That's quite some emphasis- God was *so* unhappy with what His people thought about in the mornings. What do *we* think about in the mornings?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-17.htm>

Acts 25, 26

The way Paul *begs* us to follow him (e.g. " I beseech you, be as I am" , Gal. 4:12) indicates the degree of confidence he had in acceptance by his Lord, his certainty that his way to the Kingdom was valid (Surely he had been told this by some Divine revelation?). He exhorts us to speak 'freely' in our preaching (2 Cor. 3:12), just as he himself "speak freely" in his witness to Agrippa (Acts 26:26).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-1Conversion_Of_Paul.htm

11 Nov

Ezra 7

Separation from Babylon was made the harder by the Babylonian and especially later Persian policies of making subjugated people like the Jews become useful contributors to the empire. They didn't stay long weeping by the rivers of Babylon. Likewise it was Persian policy to allow each nation their own temple, and to even encourage them in this- hence the decree to rebuild Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem. Darius did similar things to areas of Egypt which he conquered. But all this had a price tag attached- people like the Jews were to come to see themselves as essentially Babylonian or Persian, and they were to give up all idea that their god or the culture was the absolute truth. And tragically, the Jews willfully became part of this policy. There were specific commands in Isaiah for the Jews in captivity to leave Babylon and return to the land. God confirmed those who wished to obey in their choice- for Cyrus made a decree commanding them to return! But so many still remained. Significantly, Artaxerxes gave Ezra authority to rule the entire "province Beyond the River" (Ezra 7:25). The boundary of the land promised to Abraham reached to "the river"- and Ezra was being given power over all that area. And yet there is no evidence that Ezra actually did do what Artaxerxes enabled him to do- i.e. to establish rulership under his command over that area.

But potentially, the full restoration of the Kingdom promised to Abraham was made possible. The Kingdom is likewise potentially made possible for us today!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Hos 8

Equipped with this understanding, a new window opens upon the "Woe...!" passages in the prophets. The Hebrew word doesn't really imply 'Woe to you, you'd better watch out for what's coming on you!'; rather is it an expression used to express the pain of the speaker over a broken relationship, e.g. at a funeral. And yet the pain of God leads Him to hope, even desperate hope; and again that hope is expressed and felt in terms which are relative to our kind of time. Hence His many questions relating to 'How long?': "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe me?" (Num. 14:11,27); "How long will it be till they are pure?" (Hos. 8:5; Jer. 4:14; 13:27). These aren't merely rhetorical questions. There's an element of literality about God's question- He doesn't know how long it will be, He can only imagine and hope- for Israel has free will, and will not turn to Him just when He says so. For He is in covenant relationship with them, He loves them, and as we've emphasized, that must involve each party allowing the other to function independently and to have their own time and free choice for returning. These questions, and other similar statements from God, are almost God's probing of possible paths into the future- the future which He could, of course, choose to know, but it seems He chooses not to fully know. All the above indicates that God has allowed Himself to be made vulnerable. Love, promises, covenant relationship, feeling for others, revealing yourself to the object of your love- this is all part of what it means for God to enter covenant relationship with us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

Acts 27

The legalists taught that unless believers kept the circumcision laws, "ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). The very same Greek phrase is used by Paul when he calls out in urgency during the storm: "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Surely Luke's record is making a connection; the legalists taught that it was time to quit the rest of the community unless they got their way, for the sake of their eternal future; and Paul responds by teaching that our salvation depends upon us pulling together against the desperate situation we find ourselves in. It's as if the salvation of Christ's body depends upon it staying together. As time went on in the first century, the gap between the Jewish and Gentile elements, the right and the left wing, the legalists and the libertines, got ever wider. The tension got stronger. But nobody won. The Jewish element returned to the Law, and forgot all about the saving grace of Jesus. The Gentile element mixed even more with the world and its philosophies, and forgot the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. They ended up formulating blasphemous doctrines like the trinity, which nobody with any awareness of the Jewish foundation of the Father and Son could possibly have entertained. And so the faith was lost, until it was revived again in those groups who again interpreted Christianity in terms of "the hope of Israel".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-2-1Division_In_The_Church.htm

12 Nov

Ezra 8

Despite the King's decree that the Levites should accompany Ezra from Babylon, not one Levite came with Ezra (Ezra 8:15- the references to 'Levites' later in the record must refer therefore to Levites that had remained in the land after the deportation of the majority of Judah). Last minute recruiting efforts by Ezra in Casiphia produced only 38 Levites (Ezra 8:31)! They even delayed their departure from Babylon for 12 days in order to desperately try to persuade some Levites to come with them. This was how poor Judah's response was. Indeed, it appears that only 1,700 men returned to Judah with Ezra. Even generous readings of the text would give only between four and five thousand. And even when some Levites did return under Nehemiah, they weren't given their tithes and went off to live on farmsteads as subsistence farmers, resulting in the restored temple scarcely operating (Neh. 13:10,11). Despite the repentance for marriage out of the faith in Ezra's time, Nehemiah closes with the same problem having recurred. Nehemiah had to close the gates of Zion on the Sabbath (Neh. 13:19) to stop Sabbath trading going on- a sad contrast with the command in Is. 60:11 that her gates should be open *continually* in order that the Gentiles may enter in with their tribute to Yahweh. But now, the Jews were buying from the Gentiles in those very gates, which now had to be closed. So much was possible, and so little achieved... it was and is heartbreaking.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Hos 9

There was a tremendous sensitivity in Hosea to both God and to the sin of His people, honed and developed by his own relationship with Gomer. At the start of Hosea's prophecy, Israel were prosperous. They worshipped Yahweh, and assumed He was with them. And yet Hosea discounts their worship of Yahweh as being effectively idolatry. Time and again Hosea accuses Israel of idolatry, using words to describe their idolatry which are word plays on language associated with Yahweh. He speaks of their *kabod* [glory] (Hos. 9:11; 10:5)- a word usually used about the glory of Yahweh. They worshipped *lo'al* (Hos. 7:16)- and he uses *al* to refer to Yahweh in Hos. 11:7. They worshipped *sor* (Hos. 9:13)- the same consonants as *sur*, the "rock" of Yahweh (Dt. 32:31). He calls Yahweh *qados* (Hos. 11:9), but they worshipped *qedosim* (Hos. 12:1). We tend to assume that Hosea's denunciation of idolatry meant that Israel worshipped both Yahweh and various other images and idols of their pagan gods. But that seems to be an over-simplification. Archaeologists have actually not found much evidence of such gods. Summarizing much research, Cogan concludes: "There is no evidence of Assyrian interference in the Israelite cult prior to the 720 BCE annexation of Samaria [after Hosea's time]... Israel was free of any cultic obligation". And yet, Hosea speaks for all the world as if there were shrines etc. to other gods all over the place. My conclusion is that the idols, shrines etc. to which Hosea refers were therefore actually understood by Israel as a form of Yahweh worship. But he points out to them that actually, their worship of Yahweh is a form of idolatry. And all this has relevance to us. For actually things like daily Bible reading, attending church, going through the formalities of a religion, can become a form of fetishism rather than parts of the dynamic, Spirit filled life which they ought to be a vital part of. Worshipping Yahweh in the "high places", i.e. the pagan shrines, was Israel's besetting sin. It's rather like the way they turned the bronze snake of the wilderness into an idol. They, like us, never simply turned their back on the true Way. Rather did they mix it with the way of the flesh, the way of the world, and pronounced that as in fact Yahweh worship. And it was all this which Hosea was so deeply sensitive to, as demonstrated by the careful word plays he made, in order to demonstrate that their worship of Yahweh was in fact idol worship.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Acts 28

Paul wasn't against using persuasion to bring men unto his Lord, and neither should we be. He realized the methodology we use with people can affect their conversion. And he knew that personal contact was by far the best. "For this cause therefore did I intreat you to *see* AND to speak with me" (Acts 28:20 RV). He called men to have a personal meeting with him, rather than just to hear the theory. Not just to hear him, but to *see* him... for we are the essential witnesses.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-4Christ_Centredness.htm

13 Nov

Ezra 9

Jeremiah speaks as if he has committed Israel's sins; Ezra rends his clothes and plucks off his hair, as if *he* has married out of the Faith (Ezra 9:4 cp. Neh. 13:25; the Lord received the same sinner's treatment, Is. 50:6). Is this how far *we* go in our feelings for the weak?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/1-1-11Why_Forsaken_Me.htm

Hos 10

Israel had appeared to have fruit, when actually, they didn't have any at all (Hos. 10:1). The man in the parable built his spiritual house, but in fact he didn't get down to the real nitty-gritty of obedience to the Lord's words; and so it miserably, pathetically fell at judgment day. The seriousness of sin becomes de-emphasized in our lives (as it is becoming in our community), until repentance comes to mean a vague twinge of guilt. This, again, was the problem of Old Testament Israel. "They return, but not to the Most High" (Hos. 7:16); they had the sensation of regret, of turning back- but it wasn't real repentance. A few verses earlier God had commented: "They do *not* return to the Lord their God" (7:10); but they on a surface level *did* return to Him. Hosea continues his theme: "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hos. 10:1). Did they or did they not bring forth fruit? They did- but only in their own eyes. They felt they had repented, and brought forth spiritual fruit. But not in God's estimation. And we too can have the sensation of spirituality and even spiritual growth, but only in our own eyes. "Though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt him" (Hos. 11:7) in the way which true repentance requires. Is *our* repentance genuine...?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-4True_Repentance.htm

Col 1

The Lord Jesus through the cross can "present you holy and unblameable and unproveable". Yet by our preaching we "may present every man perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:22,28). The connection is clear: because we are being presented perfect in Christ through belief and baptism, we preach the opportunity of this experience to others. Likewise the Law often stressed that on account of Israel's experience of being redeemed from Egypt, they were to witness a similar grace to their neighbours and to their brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/1-2making_disciples.htm

14 Nov

Ezra 10

Ezra wept for the sins of his people (Ezra 10:1). Is this attitude seen amongst us? We lament in a gossipy way the weaknesses of the brotherhood; but is there this bleeding heart for the cases we mention? Perhaps we should never think of separating from anybody unless the decision has been come to through a process of such prayerful mourning for them first.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-3passion_for_the_lost.htm

Hos 11

The tension within God is apparent. Hosea's the clearest on this. God wants nothing more to do with His adulterous people; and then He pleads with them to come back to Him, breaking His own law, that a put away woman can't return to her first husband. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?... mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together" (Hos. 11:8). And Jeremiah has more of the same: "How can I pardon you... shall I avenge myself on a nation such as this? Shall I not punish them for these things?" (Jer. 5:7-9,28,29). God reveals Himself as oscillating between punishing and redeeming, judging sin and overlooking it. God is open to changing His stated plans (e.g. to destroy Nineveh within forty days, to destroy Israel and make of Moses a new nation). He isn't like the Allah of Islam, who conducts a monologue with his followers; the one true God of Israel earnestly seeks dialogue with His people, and as such He enters into all the contradictory feelings and internal debates which dialogue involves. 'God loves the sinner and hates the sin' has always seemed to me problematic, logically and practically. Love is in the end a personal thing; in the end love and hate are appropriate to persons, not abstractions. And the person can't so easily be separated from their actions. Ultimately, it is persons who will be saved or condemned. The prophets reveal both the wrath and love of God towards His people, in the same way as a parent or partner can feel both wrath and love towards their beloved.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

Col 2

1 Cor. 3:10-14 speak of us 'building up' God's house, the believers, on the foundation of Christ. And we will be judged for the quality of what is built- our final judgment will be a reflection of the quality of our brethren, in that their spirituality is partly determined by our efforts for them. But Col. 2:4 uses the same word to say that we are built up "in [Christ]...as [according as] ye have been taught...beware lest any man spoil you [through false teaching]. The life of fellowship with our brethren in Christ is what builds us up, if we teach each other the right things. But false teaching means that the house of believers will not be built up. This would have been especially so in ecclesias of largely illiterate members. The point is, we are all builders, each part has something to contribute, and the doing of every ecclesial service must be consciously to the end of building up one another.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-7limitations_of_pastoral_work.htm

15 Nov

Neh 1, 2

Neh. 1:5-10 is an example of how God's word should form the language and terminology of our prayers; just look up the cross references in most Bibles. Nehemiah's example is clearly based upon Deuteronomy being in his mind. Some of his allusions are conscious, others perhaps unconscious, but reflecting how the words of his prayer were rooted in the presence of the word in his mind:

Nehemiah 1	Deuteronomy
" The great and terrible God that keepeth covenant and mercy" (v.5)	7:12,21
" If ye transgress I will scatter thee abroad amongst the nations" (v.8)	4:27; Lev.. 26:33
" But if ye turn unto me	4:29
though there were cast out of you unto the uttermost parts of heaven yet will I gather them from thence	30:1-5
...the place that I have chosen to put my name there" (v.9)	12:5

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/6The_Mediation_Of_Prayer.htm

Hos 12

Appreciating that prayer is so much " in the spirit" , we can better grasp why prayer is portrayed as a struggle. Moab would pray in the time of his judgment; " but he shall not prevail" (Is. 16:12), as if the prayer process was a struggle. Jacob, by contrast, struggled with the Angel in prayer and prevailed (Hos. 12:2-4). The Romans were to strive together with Paul in prayer (Rom. 15:30); the Lord's prayers in Gethsemane were a resisting / struggling unto the point of sweating blood (Heb. 12:2). " I would that ye knew what great conflict I have [RV 'how greatly I strive / struggle'] for you...that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding" is parallel to " We do not cease to pray for you... that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 2:1 cp. 1:9,10). Paul's conflict / struggle for them was his prayer for them. Epaphras likewise was "always striving for you in his prayers" (Col. 4:12 RV). Our groanings, our struggling in prayer, is transferred to God by the Lord Jesus groaning also, but with groanings far deeper and more fervently powerful than ours (Rom. 8:22,23 cp. 26). Our prayers are to give the Father no " rest" (Is. 62:7), no cessation from violent warfare (Strong). The widow by her continual coming in prayer 'wearied ' the judge into responding; Strong defines this Greek word as meaning 'to beat and black and blue' (RVmg. gives " bruise"). It's a strange way of putting it, but this is another reminder of the intense struggle of prayer. Jacob's wrestling with the Angel was really a clinging on to him, pleading with tears for the blessing of forgiveness; and in this he was our example (Hos. 12:4-6). Lk. 21:36 RV speaks of the believer 'prevailing' with God in prayer. The 'struggles' of Moses in prayer are an example of this; through the desperation and spiritual culture of his pleading, he brought about a change even in God's stated purpose.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2-3struggle_of_prayer.htm

Col 3, 4

Most of us mix with people at the same shops or services we visit. They know your face. Give them a leaflet [we can arrange to send you leaflets if you don't have any]. There will then be a connection between you and the message when you see them in future. Col. 4:5 sums it up: "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make use of every opportunity". People are not always so impressed by the story of the drug abuser or murderer who turns to Christ. Far more arresting will probably be the life of an ordinary person like you, another ordinary worker, another woman who takes their child to school each morning...which has been transformed by a personal response to the truth of God. Someone like you who escaped from mere religion and found the ultimately true relationship with God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/14-3personal_pleading_of_the_prophet.htm

16 Nov

Neh 3

God uses people at times in ways which are right against the grain of their natural abilities. He asked goldsmiths to do the manual work of building the wall of Jerusalem, bruising their sensitive fingers against lumps of rock (Neh. 3:8,31); and Barak's victorious warriors were civil servants and writers (Jud. 5:14), not military men. Paul was sent to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews, when we'd have thought that naturally speaking, they would have been far more comfortable in the reverse roles.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/10Taking_Up_The_Cross.htm

Hos 13

Because there is only one God, there is only one glory, one Name of God, one standard of spirituality, one judge, one justifier. Whilst men seek glory and approbation and acceptance and justification from other men, they are denying the principle of one God. If there is only one God, we should seek His honour and justification, to the *total* exclusion of that of men. Hosea revealed this truth: "I am the Lord thy God...and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me...neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee [i.e. thee alone] the fatherless findeth mercy" (Hos. 13:4; 14:3). Because God alone can give salvation and mercy, therefore there is no space for worshipping or seeking for the approbation of anything or anyone else; for the receipt of mercy and salvation are the only ultimate things worth seeking. There is only one God who can give them, who can give imputed righteousness, and therefore we should seek for His acceptance alone.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-30Imputed_Righteousness.htm

1 Thes 1, 2

Paul was "well pleased to impart unto you not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us". So says the RV of 1 Thess. 2:8. It is one thing to impart the Gospel to someone. It is another to give your soul to them, because you truly love them. I suspect we have all been guilty of merely imparting the gospel, without the heart that bled within Paul. They are two quite different things. Imparting knowledge, inviting to meetings, distributing books...is not the same as giving your soul. The AV of this passage says that Paul was "*willing* to have imparted unto you...our own souls". There may be a connection back to Rom. 9:3, where in the spirit of Moses, Paul says that he is theoretically

willing to give his eternal place in the Kingdom for the sake of his hearers' conversion- even though he had learnt from Moses' example that God will not accept such a substitutionary offer. To give your life, to impart a Gospel...is one thing. But to so feel for others that you would let them go to the Kingdom rather than you... this is love. No wonder Paul was so compelling a converter. There was such an upwelling of thankful love and reflected grace behind his words of preaching. Acts 28:20 describes Paul in action: "Therefore did I *intreat* you to *see* and to *speak* with you". He wanted personal contact with them, eyeball to eyeball, to personally intreat. And in all this, he was motivated by the great paradox- that he, the unworthy, the condemned and rejected sinner, was going to be in the Kingdom. And it can be just as real and motivating for us too.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-2bent_knees_wet_eyes.htm

17 Nov

Neh 4

The initiative is with us. This means that *how* we plan to preach and care for others *does* need to be considered. Time and again, God works through humanly devised good strategies (Josh. 8:1,2; Neh. 4:9 etc.). But I love the way Derek Kidner puts it: "Scripture approves of strategy when it is a tool rather than a substitute for God"

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-6bringing_people_to_faith.htm

Hos 14

Hosea's prophecy ends with God protesting His eternal love for Israel, and a description of them in the Kingdom, when they will have 'returned' to Him: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely... His beauty shall be as the olive tree... they... shall return... Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" (14:4-7). Remember that the God / Israel relationship was a reflection of the Hosea / Gomer situation. I take this final, majestic section to be a reflection of Hosea's fantasy, his day dream, that one day Gomer would return to him and blossom as a person. For fantasies are all a part of true love. "From me is thy fruit found [Heb. 'acquired']" (14:8) is perhaps his fantasy that *somehow*, this worn out woman with dry breasts and a miscarrying womb (9:14) would *somehow* one day still bear him children of their own, and that in him "the fatherless [a reference to Gomer's illegitimate children] findeth mercy" (14:3). This fantasy of Hosea's, rooted in his amazing love for Gomer, love that was partly in pure and amazing obedience to God's *command* that he love her (3:1), is a reflection of God's dream for Israel. Hosea died with his dream unfulfilled. We are left with the question as to whether this similar loving intention of God for Israel will in fact be fulfilled, or whether it was what was potentially possible for Israel; or whether His fantasy for them will be fulfilled through a new Israel. If the latter, and we are that new Israel, then we can imagine what passionate joy the Father finds in our stumbling attempts to respond to Him and be His loyal and faithful wife. Whatever, the simple fact is that it all reflects an amazing grace, an ineffable love... and this God is our God, and Hosea who reflected all this is truly a pattern for ourselves in daily life. The very existence of such passionate love for us, love beyond reason, carries with it an inevitable warning as to our responsibilities: "Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein" (Hos. 14:9). Faced as we are by a love like this, we simply can't be passive to it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4-5-1extent_of_grace.htm

1 Thes 3, 4

he same Greek word translated "meet" in Matt. 25:6 concerning the wise virgins going out to "meet" Christ occurs also in 1 Thess. 4:17: "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up...in the clouds to *meet* the Lord in the air". The picture is therefore presented of the righteous obeying the call of their own volition, and then being confirmed in this by being 'snatched away' to meet Christ in the (literal) air. We will then travel with Christ "in the clouds" (literally) to judgment in Jerusalem. In no way, of course, does this suggestion give countenance to the preposterous Pentecostal doctrine of being 'raptured' into heaven itself. Every alternative interpretation of 1 Thess. 4:17 seems to run into trouble with the phrase "meet the Lord *in the air*". 1 Thessalonians is not a letter given to figurative language, but rather to the literal facts of the second coming. it could be today that we are called away...
http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment3_3_1.htm

18 Nov

Neh 5, 6

Is. 53:2 speaks of Messiah, in a restoration context beginning in Is. 52, as 'growing up', the same word used to describe the 'coming up' from the dry ground of Babylon. This potential Messiah was Zerubbabel, but one wonders whether when he failed to fulfil the prophecies, there was the possibility that another man could have fulfilled his role. Nehemiah 'came up' from Babylon, and was "the servant" who 'prospered' Yahweh's work (Neh. 1:11; 2:20), just as the servant prophecies required (Is. 53:10; 48:15); and he was thereby the redeemer of his brethren (Neh. 5:8). He encouraged the singing of praise on the walls of Zion (Neh. 9:5; 12:46), surely in a conscious effort to fulfil the words of Is. 60:18- that Zion's gates in Messiah's Kingdom would be praise. He was "despised" as Messiah would be (Neh. 2:19; Is. 53:3 s.w.). He entered Jerusalem on a donkey, as Messiah would (Neh. 2:12 cp. Zech. 9:9); and Neh. 2:16 sounds very much like "of the people there was none with me" (Is. 63:3). The Gentiles round about came to sit at Nehemiah's table to eat and drink (Neh. 5:17), just as Isaiah had prophesied could happen on a grander scale at the restoration of the Kingdom. One wonders if the potential fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies was transferred to him? And yet Nehemiah returned to Babylon at least once, and there is no record that on his second visit he stayed on, but rather, the implication seems to be, he returned again to the service of Babylon. The total lack of Biblical information about his later life may reflect this disappointing decision. This train of thought enables us to appreciate the joy and pleasure which the Father had when finally His beloved Son lived up to all that He sought and expected.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-10Zechariah_And_Malachi.htm

Joel 1

Time and again, the Old Testament speaks of the priests *ministering* in the priest's office. The priests are specifically called God's ministers (Is. 61:6; Jer. 33:21; Ez. 45:4; Joel 1:9,13; 2:17). The early Christians would have heard and read many of the New Testament references to ministers and ministry as invitations to see themselves as a new priesthood. The Lord said that we should aim to be a minister, a priests, to every one of our brethren, not

expecting them to minister to us, but concentrating on ministering to them (Mt. 20:26). This is exactly against the grain of our nature, and also of the concept of religion we find in the world. People *expect* to have others spiritually ministering to them. They expect a priest-figure to do all their thinking for them. But our Lord said that we are each other's priests, we're not here to be ministered ('priest-ed') to, but to minister, and give our lives in service to each other.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-2-2The_Meaning_Of_Priesthood.htm

1 Thes 5

In 1 Thess. 5:6,7 Paul alludes to Mt. 26:40,41. He saw that there were all too many similarities between him and the sleepy, weak-willed disciples in Gethsemane. He was "willing" to preach (Rom. 1:15), using a word only used elsewhere concerning the disciples then being willing in spirit but weak in operationalizing it (Mt. 26:41; Mk. 14:38); and we know that Paul often complained that he didn't preach in practice as he felt he ought to. Paul describes all of us as having been saved although we were weak, using the same word used about the disciples asleep in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:41 = Rom. 5:6). He saw the evident similarity between them and us, tragically indifferent in practice to the mental agony of our Lord, failing to share His intensity of striving- although we are so willing in spirit to do this. And yet, Paul implies, be better than them. Don't be weak and sleepy as they were when Christ wanted them awake (Mt. 26:40,41 = 1 Thess. 5:6,7). Strive for the imitation of Christ's attitude in the garden (Mt. 26:41 = Eph. 6:18). And yet in Romans 7, a depressed but realistic Paul laments that he fails in this; his description of the losing battle he experienced within him between flesh and spirit is couched in the language of Christ's rebuke to the disciples in Gethsemane.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-7-4Paul_Exposition_Of_Gethsemane.htm

19 Nov

Neh 7

Nehemiah made a special study of the genealogies in order to find an acceptable priesthood (Neh. 7:5,64). So there were Israel returning from captivity, led by a faithful remnant of the priests, looking back through their history, right back to Abraham and beyond, and seeing that their history was shot through with failure. Such self-examination extended even to considering the names parents gave their children. Marriage out of the faith was a problem at the time of the restoration, and therefore the records of the genealogies stress how this had been a problem in the past- and had still not been forgotten by God (Ezra 9:1,2). The prophets foretold that Israel's restoration would only come once they achieved a suitable recognition of their sinfulness. And the Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration from Babylon are without doubt applicable to the establishment of the Kingdom at Christ's return; which means that Israel at the time of the restoration should represent us now, on the brink of the second coming and the full re-establishment of Israel's Kingdom. The coming of that blessed time may well be dependent upon our self-examination, to the point of really taking a breath when we realize the extent of our personal and collective shortcomings all down the years. The priests who wrote those records in Chronicles were writing down the result of their national self-examination. This was the record of their lessons from Chronicles.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/4-8-2Lessons_From_Chronicles_Genealogies.htm

Joel 2

They will be sent to a mist of darkness (2 Pet. 2:17), as Paul walked about in a mist and darkness, not knowing where he was going (Acts 13:11). Thick darkness is associated with God's judgment (Is. 8:22; Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15)- and recall how the judgment of darkness upon Egypt was so severe that human movement required 'groping' (Ex. 10:21). Perhaps there will be a literal element to this in the experience of the rejected. Be that as it may, the utter *pointlessness* of life without God will be so bitterly apparent. And yet they would not face up to it in their day of opportunity. The reality of the rejection process that awaits some provides a helpful perspective against which to see the wonder of God's saving grace to us today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_7.htm

2 Thes 1,2

Note the speed with which Paul established ecclesias. He stayed a few weeks or months in cities like Lystra and Thessalonica, returning, in the case of Lystra, after 18 months, and then again a few years later. He spent three consecutive sabbaths in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2), baptized the converts, and then didn't come back to see them for about five and a half years (Acts 20:1,2). How were they kept strong? By the good shepherd, by the grace of God, by the Father and Son working with Paul. He seems to have drilled them with the basics of the Gospel and the life they needed to live, ordained immature elders who were literate and able to teach the word, and then left them what he repeatedly calls "the tradition", a document or set of teachings relating to practical life in Christ (2 Thess. 2:5; 3:6). It was perhaps the simplicity and brevity of the message that was its strength in the lives of the early converts. Their lives were based directly upon reflection upon the implications of the basic elements of the Gospel. It is today amazing how simple men and women remember and reflect upon the things taught them even verbally, and show an impressive appreciation of them when they are visited again after some months or years. Interestingly, Corinth had the most evident problems and immaturity, even though Paul spent 18 months there, whereas ecclesias like Thessalonica which he established far quicker seem to have been far sounder.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/5-9reaching_the_unreached.htm

20 Nov

Neh 8

The main priestly duty was to teach God's word to the people. A whole string of texts make this point: Dt. 24:8; 2 Kings 17:27; 2 Chron. 15:3; Neh. 8:9; Mic. 3:11. Note too the common partnership between priests and prophets. Because of their role as *teachers*, it is understandable that the anger of the first century priesthood was always associated with Christ and the apostles *teaching* the people: Mt. 21:33; Lk. 19:47; 20:1; Acts 5:21. The priests felt that their role was being challenged. As part of the priesthood, our duty is to *all* teach or communicate the word of God to each other. It was God's intention that natural Israel should obey the spirit of this, so that they would "teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord" (Heb. 8:11). That was how God intended Israel of old to fulfil this idea of being a priestly nation. The Gentile Israel has been chosen to bring forth fruit where they failed; and so we must ask if this is how we really are as a community. Where is our sense of real responsibility for each other, our sensitivity to the effect we have

upon each other? Where is the *enthusiasm of communication* which Heb. 8:11 implies? Given current communication possibilities, the current plethora of Christian magazines is indeed quite right- so long as they are communicating the real knowledge of the Lord rather than being political flagships. Discussion after Bible class, the posing of profitable questions to each other, lively correspondence columns- these are all part of it. It *isn't* something just for the academically minded. If we truly "know the Lord", we will want to communicate that relationship to others, as a Kingdom of priests!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-1-1A_Kingdom_Of_Priests.htm

Joel 3

The sequence of events in the last days is impossible to predict in detail, because depending upon human freewill, the fulfilment of the various prophecies may be suspended or be realized in more symbolic ways, as we have already seen God working like this in the past. Thus Joel 3:2 says that God will "plead" with the nations He gathers to Jerusalem, plead with them for His people, plead with them to accept His Son, as outlined in Psalm 2. They may or may not respond, and how they do will doubtless influence the sequence and nature of prophetic fulfilment which then follows.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-9Sequences_Of_Prophetic_Fulfillment.htm

2 Thes 3

Paul is set before us as "a Christ-appointed model" of the ideal believer. He himself seems to have sensed this happening when he so often invites us to follow his example (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Gal. 4:12; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:10; 2 Thess. 3:7,9). He does this quite self-consciously, for example: "I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved...let no man seek his own, but another's [profit]" (1 Cor. 10:33,24). He even says that he doesn't do things which he could legitimately allow himself, *because* he knew he was being framed as their example (2 Thess. 3:7,9). He saw in his conversion a pattern for all those who would afterwards believe (1 Tim. 1:16). Having said that he was "chief" of the tribe of sinners, Paul goes straight on to say that this "was so that in me *as chief* might Jesus Christ shew forth *all* his longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should later believe on him" (1 Tim. 1:15,16 RV). This sounds as if Paul realized that he was being set up as the chief, supreme example to us; a template for each of us, of forgiveness and zealous response to that forgiveness. Will he be our pattern today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-1Conversion_Of_Paul_old.htm

21 Nov

Neh 9

The *elohim* "found" Abraham's heart to be faithful (Neh. 9:8- a reference to the events of Genesis 18). This was by a process of research and drawing of conclusions. And our Angels are in the process of doing the same with us this very day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-3-1Moments_Of_Faith.htm

Amos 1

God stated in passages like 2 Kings 8:19 that He would not destroy Judah at the hands of her enemies for the sake of His eternal promise to David; but later, He did bring the destructions which He said He could not bring for the sake of the promises to David. Surely the conclusion is that He reinterpreted and reapplied that promise, in such a way as not to break it, and to uphold His own integrity on all counts; remaining both the faithful covenant God, and the God who judges sin. In this sense, God's word can 'change' or be "revoked". Thus God says that in the case of Damascus, He will not "revoke my word" (Amos 1:3 RVmg.)- implying that He *can and will* "revoke" His word at times. This is the extent of His sensitivity to our prayers and behaviour today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-6The_Nature_Of_Prophecy.htm

1 Tim 1-3

The Bible could not be clearer in its analysis of gossip in the church. It is like shooting an arrow from a secret place at a person (Ps. 64:4 RV). It is no coincidence that the word translated "devil" essentially means a false accuser, a slanderer (so it is translated in 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3). Slandering others is the very epitome of all that is wrong with the flesh. Strife amongst us comes from the expression of passive anger and pride (Prov. 28:25; 29:22); and strife is sown by gossip (Prov. 16:28). Therefore gossip is a way of expressing our anger and pride, no matter how nicely dressed up we make them. Or to put it in human terms, we pull a man down to make ourselves look taller. So be aware: our own frustrations, our passive resentments, the hurt we have experienced from others, all this if left to itself will result in a critical attitude towards our brethren, and will be expressed in gossip.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-4-1Gossip_In_The_Church.htm

22 Nov

Neh 10

In Nehemiah's time, the people "separated themselves *from* the peoples of the lands *unto* the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters...they *clave to* their brethren" (Neh. 10:28,29). Close fellowship with one's brethren arises from having gone out *from* the surrounding world, *unto* the things of God's word. That, at least, was the theory. In reality, those exiles who returned found this separation very difficult. In fact, the account of Judah's separation from the surrounding peoples reads similar to that of the purges from idolatry during the reign of the kings. They separated / purged, and then, within a few years, we read of them doing so again. Initially, the exiles separated from the peoples of the land (Ezra 6:21); by 9:1 they are in need of separating again; and by 10:11 likewise; then they separate (10:16), only to need another call to separation by the time of Neh. 9:2; 13:3. They obviously found it extremely difficult to be separated *from* the surrounding world *unto* God's law (Neh. 10:28).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-2-1Terah_And_Abram.htm

Amos 2

We shrug when we see pride and trust in wealth. Rich or poor, we all tend to trust in money. Thinking that that's life... under the sun. But the prophets went ballistic about this. We've developed established patterns of indifference to this kind of thing. But the prophet's

consciences were keenly sensitive to these patterns, and they openly challenged them. They weren't just empty moralizers, bleating on about the state of the nation; their words are an assault of the mind and conscience. Amos speaks of judgment to come in dramatic terms 'just' because creditors sold their debtors into slavery just to recover the cost of a pair of shoes (Am. 2:6,7). Jer. 22:13-19 is a long and passionate condemnation of Jehoiakim for building an extension to his house, using his neighbours as workmen and not giving them the agreed wages. We see this sort of thing all the time. And shrug and think it good fortune it didn't happen to us. But that's not the spirit of prophecy. In the midst of Judah's prosperity, with a land "filled with silver and gold" (Is. 2:7), visions of doom haunted Isaiah's soul; he couldn't just go along with the swing of things, knowing that all that wealth was an illusion and being used as an antithesis to faith. Now that's something we see all the time around us and in the brotherhood; but is our soul touched like his was? Do we know the spirit of the prophets?

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-4.htm>

1 Tim 4, 5

1 Tim. 5:5 shows that the sign of a true widow was that she continued in prayers night and day. She was supported materially so that she could keep up this work of praying for others (abused into the Catholic system of paying for prayers to be said). There was a specific group of "widows" in the early ecclesias, as in Acts 7. Their duty was to pray for others; so important was prayer seen. Is prayer *so* important for us?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-1-3Prayer_Meetings.htm

23 Nov

Neh 11

When "the time to favour Zion" came, at the end of the 70 years, God's servants Israel were to "take pleasure in her stones, and favour [even] the dust thereof"; and then, "when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory" (Ps. 102:13-16). But the few Jews who returned chose not to live in Jerusalem, preferring to carve out for themselves farmsteads in the countryside (Neh. 11:1), and the strength of those that shifted the rubble in Jerusalem decayed...they saw her dust and scattered stones as a nuisance, and didn't take pleasure in them (Neh. 4:10). And so the Lord could not then appear in glory. Is His second coming likewise dependent upon *our* attitudes today?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-4Contemporary_Relevance_Of_Ezekiels_Temple.htm

Amos 3

When God revealed His Name to His people, opening up the very essence of His character to them, He was making Himself vulnerable. We reveal ourselves intimately to another because we wish for them to make a response to us, to love us for what we revealed to them. God revealed Himself to Israel, He sought for intimacy in the covenant relationship, and therefore was and is all the more hurt when His people turn away from Him, after having revealed to them all the wonders of His word (Hos. 8:12). God revealed Himself to Israel alone, in all the detail of His law and prophets (Am. 3:2). And they didn't want Him. Hence His very deep hurt; and also, His excited joy that we grasp that same word with eager minds and seek to

love, understand and serve Him faithfully to the end. Given the rejection experienced by God, and the genuine and very real nature of His emotional response to it, it's natural that He would earnestly seek another relationship- and this is just the huge emotional energy He puts into searching for His new bride. He so wants intimacy, a relationship of meaning and mutuality. In our efforts to help each other perceive that, in our sharing of His word with the world and with other believers, in our efforts to help people get baptized into covenant with Him... we are working in step with His earnest desire for relationship with people. And He will bless our efforts. And as we seek to root out of our lives and characters those things which come between us and Him, we likewise will enjoy His very special and joyful blessing and empowerment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

1 Tim 6

When Paul exalts that Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, this isn't just some literary flourish. It is embedded within a context of telling the believers to quit materialism, indeed to flee from its snare. 1 Tim. 6:6-14 concern this; and then there is the passage about Christ's exaltation (:15,16), and then a continued plea to share riches rather than build them up (:17-19). Because He is Lord of all, we should quit our materialism and sense of self-ownership. For we are His, and all we have is for His service too. And the principle of His being Lord affects every aspect of our spirituality. Dennis Gillet truly observed: "Mastery is gained by crowning the Master as Lord and King".

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-25Jesus_Is_Lord.htm

24 Nov

Neh 12

The fact they had to seek the Levites and gather them to Jerusalem, presumably off their farmsteads, contrasts with the way that the singers (who historically had been Gentiles faithful to the covenant) gathered *themselves* to Jerusalem (Neh. 12:27,28). We are a Kingdom of priests- the failures of the Old Testament Levites stand as our warning. Are we today too concerned about our own petty farmsteads, rather than perceiving that we're in this life to serve others?

Amos 4

On their journey to Canaan, the Israelites worshipped idols. Because of this, "God turned, and gave them up (over) to worship the host of heaven...I gave them up to the hardness of their hearts" (Acts 7:42; Ps. 81:12 AVmg.). God reached a stage where He actually encouraged Israel to worship idols; He confirmed them in their rejection of Him. And throughout their history, He encouraged them in their idolatry (Ez. 20:39; Am. 4:4). God is able to operate with us today in just the same way, if we continually chose the flesh over the spirit.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-11The_Downward_Spiral.html

2 Tim 1

Faith can become just vague hope for something better, rather than a "confident assurance" , a seeing of the unseen. Paul's reference to " unfeigned faith" (1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:5) as the goal of personal and ecclesial life would suggest that he realized the temptation to have a fake, feigned faith. Many of the Jews believed on Christ (Jn. 8:30)- but He rebukes them for not being His " disciples indeed" , not really having the freedom which a true acceptance of the Truth will bring, not really being children of Abraham, still living in sin, not really hearing His word, and passively wanting to kill Him (Jn. 8:33-44). Yet He spoke all these criticisms to those whom the record itself describes as believing in Him (Jn. 8:31). It's as if the Spirit wants to show us that belief in Christ can exist on a completely surface level.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-13-6Unfeigned_Faith.htm

25 Nov

Neh 13

Hearts that bleed will feel not only for the world, but for our brethren too. Think of Nehemiah: " I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it *grieved* me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber (Neh. 13:8). His *grief* led him to discipline Tobiah. Grief should likewise be the motive for ecclesial discipline today (as in 1 Cor. 5:2). The same word is translated " sad" in Neh. 2:3: " why should not my countenance be sad [grieved], when the city, the place of my fathers sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" . The King observed that his " sorrow of heart" was written all over his face, even though he was trying to conceal it. His sadness for His weak people was engraven in His body language. It could not be hidden, even though he became as it were a fool for Christ's sake.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-4loving_our_brethren.htm

Amos 5

The prophets often make absolute statements, which are then qualified by conditions. Take Am. 5:2: "The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise...there is none to raise her up". This sounds final. She shall no more rise up. But Amos continues later in the chapter: "Seek ye me, and ye shall live [be 'raised up']". And he repeats it three times (Am. 5:4,6,14). And so the prophecies of Ezekiel about the temple may seem definite, but this is not to say that conditions are not built in to their fulfilment. The love of God for us is such that He is willing to break as it were His own word, so eager is He for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-2-1Conditional_Prophecy.htm

2 Tim 2

Paul had to warn Timothy against the tendency to think that a man can attain the crown of mastery without striving for it according to the laws (2 Tim. 2:5). We can have an appearance of spiritual progress towards the crown, as did the man who quickly built his house on the sand. But it was the man who perhaps didn't finish his house (we are left to imagine) but who had hacked away at the rock of his own heart, striving to seriously obey the *essence* of his Lord's words, who was accepted in the end.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/10Taking_Up_The_Cross.htm

26 Nov

Esth 1

It's sometimes said that the book of Esther isn't quoted elsewhere in Scripture. There may not be explicit quotation, but there is certainly allusion. Ahasuerus sat on his throne, to tell others of "his glorious Kingdom" (Esther 1:4). The very same two Hebrew words occur again in Ps. 145:11,12, where we read [in a Psalm that may well have been written or used by the righteous remnant in Babylon] that it is *Yahweh* God of Israel who has a Kingdom of glory, and who ultimately hears the cry of His people in distress, as Ahasuerus did. The Kingdom of Media and Persia had books in which the good and bad deeds of the citizens were written (Esther 10:2); and so in the one true Kingdom, there are 'books' from which the ultimate King will judge His people. Clearly, the Kingdom of Ahasuerus is being set up as an anti-Kingdom of God, with an antichrist figure ruling it, faking the Kingdom of God. Note how the Assyrians described their Kingdom as a place where men sat happily under their own vine and fig tree- consciously applying the language of God's Kingdom to their Kingdom (Is. 36:16 cp. Mic. 4:4). And sadly the majority of God's people preferred the fake Kingdom to the true and ultimate Kingdom of *Yahweh*, which they had the opportunity to work towards in His land.

Likewise, Ahasuerus is described as reigning over territory from India to Ethiopia (Esther 1:1)- the very land promised to Abraham, the territory of the intended Kingdom of God. The description of his court and the drinking "according to the law" from the *Yahweh*'s own golden temple vessels is all replete with reference to the construction of the tabernacle and Solomon's temple: "There were hangings of white cloth, of green, and of blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the couches were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and white, and yellow, and black marble" (Esther 1:6,7). And they drunk there "the wine of the Kingdom" (Esther 1:7 Heb.). The seven elders who stood before the King's throne (Esther 1:14) may be reflective of the seven spirits before the throne of the true King (Rev. 1:4; 4:5). And of course the claim in Esther 1:19 that the words of the King could not be altered [s.w. transgressed] uses the same Hebrew words as found in the statements of fact that the words of King *Yahweh* cannot be altered / transgressed (Jer. 34:18). And the King's decrees had to be published in every language, to every nation (Esther 1:21)- just as the great commission spoke of the Lord's Gospel being likewise distributed. When the Lord spoke of how He as the true King would give the 'place' of the rejected to those better than they- i.e. those more humble (Lk. 14:9)- surely He had in mind how Ahasuerus gave Vashti's "royal estate unto another that is better than she" (Esther 1:19). This connection makes Ahasuerus to be an anti-Christ figure. We too live in a world which apes the true Kingdom.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Amos 6

We should *feel* His shame, feel the tragedy of the cross; that Israel slew their Saviour. The memory of His cross cannot be simply a religious ritual. The ecclesia in the time of Amos "chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not

grieved for the affliction of Joseph. (Am. 6:5,6). They drunk wine and anointed their faces with oil- rejoicing in Gods blessings. They looked back to the heritage of their spiritual ancestors (David), and on a surface level appeared to follow them. They chanted the temple songs, and yet there was no grief within them for the affliction of Gods people. The archers were to surely grieve Joseph (Gen. 49:23), but they chose to ignore the terrible import of those prophecies of Messiahs suffering. There was the appearance of religion and worship, but no grief nor passion for the tragedy of Messiahs forthcoming death, no grieving for the tragedy of Gods people, who were about to be afflicted for their sins. And in this we must take our warning.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-5reaching_those_who_left_church.htm

2 Tim 3, 4

There are a number of aspects of Paul's life which clearly demonstrate his spiritual growth; especially if the Acts and epistles are read chronologically. Paul wrote 2 Tim. 4 when news of his imminent death had just been broken to him (2 Tim. 4:6 Gk.). As Paul faced his death, there was a deep self-knowledge within him that he was ready, that he was "there". As we face the imminent return of the Lord, it should be possible for us to have a similar sense: "I am now ready..." . If we don't know that we are "in the faith" and that "Christ is in you", then we are "reprobates" (2 Cor. 13:5). All those who will be accepted *must*, therefore, *will*, therefore, have a measure of self-knowledge and appreciation of how far they've grown in Christ. Growth is a natural process, it's impossible to feel it happening. But by looking back on our lives and attitudes and comparing them with the experience of successful believers, it *is* possible to get some idea of our readiness for the judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/14-1Conversion_Of_Paul.htm

27 Nov

Esth 2

What she did was brave, but it seems to be more human bravery than an act of spiritual faith. The omission of any mention of prayer seems intentional- to highlight that the Jewish community were simply not prayerful as they should've been. The book of Esther was surely to encourage the Jews that despite their weakness, God was prepared to work with them. Esther appears to have slept with [‘went in unto’] the King before he married her; ate unclean food (Esther 2:9; cp. Dan. 1:5, 8), and finally married a Gentile. And she didn't tell her husband that she was Jewish for the first 5 years of their marriage (Esther 2:16; 3:7). It's almost certain that she would've acted like a Persian woman religiously in order for this to be the case; she certainly wasn't an observant keeper of the Mosaic law. She's almost set up in contrast with Daniel, who refused to defile himself in these ways and maintained his conscience in the same environment at whatever cost. But the point of Esther is to show that God was eager to work with such as Esther, He hadn't quit on His people. And of course if Esther and Mordecai had done the right thing and returned to Judah as commanded, the whole situation would never have arisen, and there would've been no Jews left in Babylon to persecute. It seems that the history in the book of Esther is an example of how God sent 'fishers and hunters' to encourage the Jews to return as He commanded them (Jer. 16:16)- but even then, they didn't.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Amos 7

Although the prophets were on God's side as it were, sharing His spirit, speaking His words, they were also men, and they were largely Jews, members of the nation upon whom He was announcing His wrath. At times, they reason with God. Amos delivered God's judgment against his people, and then pleaded: "O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee! How can Jacob stand?... the Lord repented... It shall not be, said the Lord" (Am. 7:2-6- other examples in Is. 6:11; Jer. 4:14; Ps. 74:10). This was how well the prophets knew God; and yet again, it shows that they weren't merely impersonally reproducing a message from God. They were involved in it and highly sensitive to it. The spirit of the prophets is to be in us- for the testimony of Jesus is to be done in the spirit of the prophets.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-1.htm>

Tit 1-3

The spiritual life renews (Tit. 3:5), giving us that *newness* of life, that ongoing baptism and resurrection experience, which Rom. 6:4 promises. This way of life, as it develops, creates its own momentum for further change. If we walk in the spirit (another way of describing the spiritual 'way of life') we will not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-15A_Way_Of_Life.htm

28 Nov

Esth 3, 4

When we read of the Jews fasting in sackcloth and ashes (Esther 4:3), we almost expect to hear that they also prayed; certainly a later Jewish audience would've expected this. For fasting, sackcloth and ashes are elsewhere associated with prayer (Jer. 14:12; Neh. 9:1; Ezra 8:21,23; 1 Sam. 7:6; Joel 2:12; Jonah 3:8). That's an impressive catena of passages. The lack of mention of prayer stands out in sharp relief. Surely the reason was to develop a theme- of how God works through the unstated, through the unwritten, through the silently implied... And this literary device makes us as readers and hearers imagine more deeply how much the Jews would've prayed to their God, the God they'd conveniently forgotten amidst their prosperity and nominal acceptance of the Marduk cult. Likewise we read that Esther fasted before going in to the King- which, it's been observed, would've made her less attractive to the King but more attractive to God. She finally learnt that human advantage and beauty can't save.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Amos 8

We have an uncanny ability to become numb to sin the more we see or do it. But not so Almighty, all righteous God. This is a feature of His nature that needs meditation. "The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob [i.e. Himself, so important is this], Surely I will never forget any of their works" (Am. 8:7). "They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness" (Hos. 7:2). Sin is serious.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-12-2Sin_Is_Serious.htm

Philemon

Philemon owed his salvation to Paul's preaching, and was therefore eternally obligated to him (Philemon 19). We too can be a tree of life to those with whom we live; we can win their souls for the Kingdom (Prov. 11:30). The Thessalonians would be accepted in the final glory of judgment day simply "because our testimony among you was believed" (2 Thess. 1:10). Eve, taken out of the wounded side of the first man, was a type of the ecclesia; and her name means 'source of life', in anticipation of how the church would bring life to the world. We really can be responsible for others coming to eternity. So let's go and share with them today!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/9-3power_of_preaching.htm

29 Nov

Esth 5, 6

When Esther's nerve failed [as it seems to me], and she cops out of making her request by asking the King and Haman to come to a banquet, she finds herself saying: "Let the King come with Haman today" (Esther 5:4). The Hebrew text reads: "Ybw' Hmlk Whmn Hywm"- the first letter of those four Hebrew words spells YHWH, the Name of God which never occurs in the book of Esther. Truly God's strength is made perfect in human weakness. In that very moment of failure, the cop out, God was revealed in His essence. And He proceeded to work through the element of suspense which her request created... to pique the King's desire to help, and to raise Haman's pride at having been invited, so that he would act even more foolishly, leading to his downfall. It could also be noted that Esther's entire intercession could so easily have been spoiled if Haman had suspected her machinations against him. But he didn't; he felt very honoured to have been invited by Esther to the banquet, and he boasted about it. In other words, Esther concealed her true feelings towards him. And where did she learn to do that? Surely in a lifetime of concealing her true Jewish identity and religious feelings, when actually she shouldn't have done so.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Amos 9

Am. 9:11-15 is a prophecy which could have had one fulfillment, but ended up being given another. "I will *raise up*" uses a Hebrew word very commonly featured in the records of the restoration, when the people were exhorted to "rise up and build" (Ezra 1:5; 3:2; 10:4,15; Neh. 2:18,20). The statement that they would "close up the breaches thereof" is exactly the language of Neh. 6:1, which records that the walls were rebuilt so that there was no breach [s.w.] therein. It was after the Babylonian invasion that Zion was "fallen" and 'ruined' (s.w. Jer. 31:18; 45:4; Lam. 2:2,17). "I will build it" is exactly the theme of the records of the return from Babylon (Ezra 1:2,3,5; 3:2,10; 4:1-4; Neh. 2:5,17,18,20; 3:1-3, 13-15; 4:1,3,5,6,10,17,18; 6:1,6; 7:1). Surely Amos 9 is saying that at the rebuilding at the time of the restoration, God's people could have ushered in the Kingdom age of agricultural plenty and victory over their Arab neighbours. But they intermarried with Edom, and suffered drought because they didn't fulfil the requirements to rebuild Zion correctly. But the words of

Amos were still to come true in some form- they are given an application in Acts 15:17 which may appear to be way out of context, i.e. to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Thus words which could have had a plain fulfilment at the restoration were given a delayed fulfilment; but they were not fulfilled in a literal sense, but in a spiritual one. And so it is with prophecies like Ezekiel 38, and the temple prophecies of Ezekiel. They will be fulfilled in spiritual essence, but probably not in strict literality, although they *could have been* had God's people been more 'fulfilling' of them. And so it is true of us today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-5Potential_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

Heb 1, 2

A grasp of who the Lord Jesus really is and the height of His present exaltation will naturally result in a confession of Him to the world, as well as a deep personal obedience to His word and will (Heb. 2:1).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-24Jesus_Is_The_Christ.htm

30 Nov

Esth 7, 8

In the final sealing of Haman's fate, we again see providence. There are Esther, Haman and the King sitting at a meal. Esther reveals Haman's evil. And then the King goes out, leaving the two of them alone. He'd been drinking- did he go out to the washroom? Haman approaches Esther's couch to beg for mercy, perhaps touching her feet, in a typical Persian way of begging for mercy. And then, he faints. The King returns to the room. And there's Esther lying on the couch with Haman collapsed almost all over her, leading the King to assume Haman was making an advance on the King. As if that wasn't providential enough, there's another point of language that might rather fit in here. In Esther 7:6 we read of Esther denouncing Haman to the King as "this wicked Haman". There's a very fine difference in Hebrew between *hara* ["wicked"] and *harea* ["the lover"- s.w. Jer. 3:1; Hos. 3:1]- so much so that Ehrlich's commentary suggests that Esther actually accused Haman of being her would-be lover by the word she used. I'm not qualified to comment upon which language Esther would've spoken to the King in, and whether the same word play would've been possible. But if it was so- and there are to this day certain basic similarities between all the Semitic languages- then we can again see providence. For she'd have set up the thought in the King's mind, that just possibly Haman was coming on at his wife. And then he goes out to the loo and comes back to the room to find the guy slumped over his wife. Such providence is at work in our lives today, no less dramatically (when we analyze it).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Obadiah

The fact Esau mocked Jacob as he skulked off to Padan Aram is picked up in Obadiah 12 as a ground for Esau's condemnation; and yet, humanly, Jacob was at that time by far the bigger and more responsible sinner. A bit of mocking from Esau was, from a human standpoint, a mild response. And yet the Divine bias for Jacob is a statement to all us weak ones who follow, for whom God is indeed the God of Jacob. His special love is, for some reason, with us; and He sees us so positively.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/2-6Jacob_And_Imputed_Righteousness.htm

Heb 3- 5

We must frame and offer our prayers in the full realization of the agonizing effort Jesus is willing to make to intercede. Remember how Stephen saw the Lord Jesus *standing* at the right hand of the Heavenly throne, whereas many times in Hebrews we read of how He has *sat* down there, in contrast to Mosaic priests who stand up. Yet such was the Lord's passion in intercession for Stephen that He *stood* up from His usually seated position. And this is going on right now, and it will do for you, too, next time you give thanks for a meal in His name, and when you pray tonight. The risen and exalted Lord is spoken of as being shamed, being crucified afresh, as agonizing in prayer for us just as He did on the cross (Rom. 8:24 cp. Heb. 5:7-9). On the cross, He made intercession for us (Is. 53:11,12); but now He ever liveth to make such intercession (Heb. 7:25). There He bore our sins; and yet now He still bears our sins (Is. 53:4-6. 11).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-9how_to_improve_prayer.htm

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December

1 Dec

Esther 9, 10

The book of Esther has a sad ending- the Jews are even more popular, even richer. Our loving Father gives us as His children what we beg Him for materially- but so often, it's not for our good spiritually. God must be *so* torn- between giving us what we want, what we whine for, what humanly we obviously need and would desperately like to have... and yet knowing that this is not for our spiritual good. We wonder what happened to Esther. Ahasuerus was slain soon after the events of the book of Esther- typically, the wife and supporters of the King would've been slain or persecuted. Was this not another prod from God for Esther and Mordecai to return to Judah? It's simply breathtaking how we are in God's grip. He doesn't give up on us. He works, as Job perceived, visiting us every moment in providential touches and prods, in order to encourage us to walk towards His Kingdom and quit the fake Kingdoms of this world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

Jonah 1

Jonah is a classic example of a man slipping into the downward spiral- he goes *down* to Joppa, *down* into the ship, *down* into the very bottom of the ship, and finally *down* into the depths of the sea (Jonah 1). Sin, but its very nature, leads to more sin- e.g. adultery is a fire, once committed it tends to burn ever more fiercely to a man's destruction (Job 31:12). Let's not fall into this spiral!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-11The_Downward_Spiral.html

Heb 6, 7

We must be careful not to think that our promised inheritance is *only* eternal life; it is something being personally prepared for each of us. The language of preparation seems inappropriate if our reward is only eternal life. The husbandman produces fruit which is appropriate to his labours, and so our eternal future and being will be a reflection of our labours now (Heb. 6:7). Not that salvation depends upon our works: it is the free, gracious gift of God. But the *nature* of our eternity will be a reflection of our present efforts.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-2Relationships_In_The_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

2 Dec

Job 1, 2

The satan in the book of Job expresses his serious doubt that any man would serve God for no prospect of reward in this life (Job 1:9). One of the themes of the book of Job is to show how a real believer *will* serve God for nothing. In fact, Job went beyond this. He says that he will still serve God even if he gets nothing from Him in this life *and even if there is no future reward either*, and even if God treats Him unfairly; 'Even if', Job speculates, 'God *slays me* (not just 'kills' me)' (consider Job 13:15; 14:7,14; 19:10). This was love of God, this was devotion to ones' creator, despite not understanding His ways. In Malachi's time, the Jews were expecting a reward from God for every little thing they did. They are rebuked in language which is full of allusion back to Job, and his willingness to serve God "for nought" (Mal. 1:10).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-4-2Examples_Of_Selflessness.htm

Jonah 2, 3

The Biblical records of those who took the easy way (as they thought it) often emphasize that they ended up in essence with the same experience of suffering which they would have had if they followed the way of the Kingdom. Those who worshipped idols forsook their own mercy (Jonah 2:8).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-9The_Logic_Of_Endurance.htm

Heb 8, 9

One almost gets the impression that Paul is speaking with great constraints on his time: " the cherubims...of which we cannot now speak particularly...what shall I more say? for the time is failing me, running out" (Heb. 9:5; 11:32 Gk.). These sort of comments would surely be irrelevant in a written letter. But as a transcript of a live sermon, they make perfect sense. M. R. Vincent in his *Word Studies Of The NT* observed in Hebrews " a rhythmical structure of sentences (with) sonorous compounds" , as if what is written had first been spoken. This is one of many reasons for thinking that Hebrews is actually the transcript of a breaking of bread exhortation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-3hebrews_breaking_of_bread_sermon.htm

3 Dec

Job 3, 4

The Hebrew word usually translated “tongue” is also put by metonymy for the person- because a man’s words reflect who he really and essentially is. And this means we shouldn’t justify our bad speaking by feeling that underneath, we aren’t *really* like that. We can’t shout and scream hard words at our partner or children or brethren and think that really, we love them underneath. Let’s not think that the way words come out is something involuntary. Job and his friends (Job 4:2) all justified their inappropriate words by reasoning that a man just couldn’t but speak out what he felt given the situation. But they all learnt in the end how far better it would have been not to have spoken as they did. They laid their hands upon their mouths. Words *can* be controlled. We *are* culpable for them. Because a man’s words are counted as who he is.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-16Controlling_Our_Words.htm

Jonah 4

Jonah's relationship with God involved what could be called 'move and countermove'. God's responses to Jonah indicated a very deep awareness and sensitivity to what Jonah was saying and feeling. The way the record is presented in Jonah 4 [in Hebrew] brings this out powerfully:

Jonah 4:2,3	Jonah's monologue	39 words
Jonah 4:4	God's question	3 words
Jonah 4:8	Jonah's question	3 words
Jonah 4:9	God and Jonah in dialogue	5 words for God 5 words for Jonah
Jonah 4:10,11	God's monologue	39 words

This same dialogue with God is possible for us today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-1-3Mutuality_Between_God_And_Man.htm

Heb 10

ical term for the promises, and it was these things that were ever " before mine eyes" , and the way of life in which he walked (Ps. 26:3). The promises of God are so sure of fulfillment that we can see them, and should seek to feel them, as having been effectively fulfilled to us already in prospect. Heb. 10:36 speaks of 'receiving the promise'. We must fill in the ellipsis: 'receive the *fulfillment of* the promise'. God's promise is effectively it's fulfillment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

4 Dec

Job 5

Our prayers for others really can influence them and even affect their standing with God. Job believed this, in that he prayed God would forgive his children in case they sinned. The friends mocked this in Job 5:4; 8:4; 17:5 and 20:10, saying that the children of the foolish die for their *own* sins, whereas, by implication, Job had figured that *his* prayers and sacrifices could gain *them* forgiveness. Yet in the end, Yahweh stated that Job had understood Him and His principles right, whereas the friends hadn't.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/9-3limitation_of_prayer.htm

Mic 1

Often the prophets break off from predicting coming condemnation to *plead personally* with their hearers to repent [this explains some of the strange shifts of pronouns in the prophets]. This is a prototype for the even more passionate Christian living which we should be experiencing. Take Micah. Chapter 2 is a message of judgment against Israel. And then Micah pleads: "And I said, Hear, I *pray* you, O heads of Jacob...is it not for you to know [the coming of] judgment?" (3:1). Likewise: "For this will I wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like jackals...at Beth-le-Aphrah have I rolled myself in the dust" (Mic. 1:8,10 RV). Rolling naked in the dust...this was the extent of Micah's passion for the repentance of his audience. He comes to the point where he would fain make sacrifice for Israel, even to the point of offering his firstborn son, so strongly did he take upon himself the sins of his people. But he tells Israel that even this will be no good; they must repent themselves: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord...shall I come before him with burnt offerings....shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?...what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly...and to humble thyself [in repentance]" (6:6-8). In all this, Micah came close to the spirit of the Father and Son. For the Father *would* give His firstborn for their sin.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-13-2Passionate_Christian_Living.htm

Heb 11

When we read that the faithful 'saw' the promises although they didn't receive them, we are surely meant to understand that they 'saw' the *fulfilment* of the promises (Heb. 11:13). 'The promises' are so sure of fulfilment that the phrase is put by metonymy for 'the fulfilment of the promises'. And because of their utter certainty, we are to be strangers and pilgrims, and unworldly (Heb. 11:13,14). There is therefore an obvious link between doctrine and practice. A doctrine believed leads to us coming out of this tangled world. Likewise 1 Jn. 5:5 teaches that we overcome the world by believing an idea- that Jesus is the Son of God [as promised to Abraham and David].

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

5 Dec

Job 6, 7

The description of life as a vapour in James 4:14 appears to be an allusion to Job 7:7: "O remember that my life is wind". Thus James is asking them to learn the lesson of Job, as he does in 5:11; to come to a true understanding of the weakness of human nature through responding in humility to the trials of life, and to the knowledge of God directly provided by Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/James_4.html

Mic 2

he boundaries of the promised land and indeed the individual possessions of the tribes were changed by God in accordance with the weakness of Israel to actually drive out the tribes and take the inheritance (consider how the inheritance of Simeon and Judah was merged because of this inability to expel the Canaanites, Josh. 19:1). He “changed the portion of my people” (Mic. 2:4). Yet God worked with them in this progressive lowering of levels. God operates in the same way with us today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Heb 12

In *Against Celsus* 3.55, Origen defends Christianity against the allegation that it requires men to leave the world of men and go mix with women and children in “the washerwoman’s shop”- presumably a house church Celsus knew. Lucian of Samosata even mocked Christianity as being largely comprised of children and “old hags called widows”. Marcus Cornelius Fronto likewise mocked the way “children” [and by that term he would’ve referred to teenagers too] participated in the breaking of bread [*Octavius* 8-9]. The teaching of the Lord Jesus was attractive to children / young people. They like women were treated as of little worth; the Greco-Roman world considered that children had to be taught, and couldn’t teach a man anything. But the Lord Jesus repeatedly set children up as examples of discipleship (Mk. 9:36,37; Lk. 9:47,48; as Heb. 12:5-9). So we can understand the appeal of early Christianity to young people, teenagers, especially girls. O.M. Bakke has written a fascinating study entitled *When Children Became People*. The thesis is that the teaching of Christianity gave disenfranchised people an identity and meaning as persons- women and slaves are obvious examples- but this also applied to children / young people. They too were disregarded as people in Mediterranean society; and yet in Christ they were given their value as people. In the house church setting, we can imagine how this happened. Celsus mocks how teenage boys go to Christian house churches to be taught by women- reflecting how attractive Christianity was for young people.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-3-2Oikonomia_Household_Fellowships.htm

6 Dec

Job 8

The words of the friends suggest that their view was in fact that of the satan in the prologue. Satan obviously quibbled with God's pronouncement of Job as perfect and upright (1:8). And Bildad likewise seems to allude to this when he comments concerning Job's downfall: " If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee" (8:6).

<http://www.realdevil.info/5-4-1.htm>

Mic 3, 4

The reality of God’s anger, His hurt, His jealousy, means that God isn’t indifferent to sin. And neither should we be, increasingly surrounded by it as we are, with sin presented to us as

the norm of human existence. We may feel or express disapproval at sin; but God's reaction is something which language can't convey. It results in the broken heart of God. This is the message of the prophets: that we must end our indifference, quite literally, for God's sake. Sadly, many readers of the prophets seem to feel that these men are merely droning on, one prophet, one chapter, seems so much like the next. Yet read sensitively, and in a good translation, the words of the prophets expose us to a relentless shattering of indifference. Their words are onslaughts against cherished assumptions, patterns of living, challenging our endless evasions of issues, calling faith and behaviour to account. They are the very voice of God passionately imploring us to turn more fully to Him. Their task was "to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (Mic. 3:8).

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-3.htm>

Heb 13

The letter to the Hebrew Christians describes salvation and the Kingdom with the idea of inheritance. The believers had possessions (Heb. 10:34), had been generous to others (Heb. 6:10), and yet needed the exhortation to "not live for money; be content with what you have" (Heb. 13:5) and to "share what you have with others" (Heb. 13:16). We could surmise that this audience weren't unlike many of us today- not overly wealthy, but sorely tempted to be obsessed by possessions and material advantage. And to them, as to us, the writer emphasizes that salvation in Christ is the ultimate inheritance or possession (Heb. 1:2,4,14, 6:12,17; 9:15; 11:7; 12:17); this is the ultimate "profit" (Heb. 13:17). Hence Esau was quoted as an example- he gave up his inheritance for the sake of a material meal (Heb. 12:15-17). The *eternal* inheritance which is promised to us in the Gospel, rooted as it is in the promises to the Jewish fathers, should make us not seek for great material inheritance in this present world.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-13Covenant_Relationship_With_God.htm

7 Dec

Job 9

Consider how the Lord taught ambition in prayer- He put before His men the real possibility of moving a mountain into the sea, if that was what was required (Mk. 11:23). This example wasn't off the top of His head; He was consciously alluding to Job 9:5, where Job says that God alone, but not man, can do something like moving a mountain into the sea. And the Lord is saying: 'Yes, God alone can do it; but such is the potential power of prayer, that He will hearken to your requests to do such things- and do them'.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-6Spiritual_Ambition.htm

Mic 5

The "pangs" of the pain of the Babylonian invasion ought to have been birth pangs which would result in the "daughter of Zion" giving birth to new spiritual life and then going forth out of the city of Babylon and returning to her land (Mic. 4:9,10). But it didn't happen; they experienced the pain, but it was as if their spiritual rebirth was actually a stillbirth in the end. The idea was that in Babylon, Zion would be "delivered" of her new child, she would "arise and thresh" the surrounding nations (Mic. 4:13), then a Messiah would be born in Bethlehem

and lead Judah in the destruction of her enemies (Mic. 5:2,5-8). All this never came to pass, because in fact Judah were not spiritually reformed and reborn in Babylon. Mic. 4:10 speaks of how they would be "rescued" in Babylon, or (RV) "redeemed". That seems to me to be a reference to the miraculous deliverance / redemption of Judah from the pogrom of Haman as recorded in Esther. Mic. 5:8,9,14 goes on to speak of how at that time "the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations [the various nations that comprised Babylon, where the Jews lived]... as a lion among the beasts of the forest... let your hand be lifted up upon your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off... I will destroy your enemies" (RVmg.). This would be a reference to how the Jews defended themselves against their enemies after the demise of Haman and slew so many of them. But this was only a fraction of what could've been; "seven shepherds and eight princes" (Mic. 5:7 RVmg.) could have been raised up, a Messiah could've been born in Bethlehem, and Judah would have become as Babylon then was, "a lion among the beasts" [the lion was a symbol of Babylon]. But they were content with having escaped Haman's pogrom, and Esther ends on the sad note of the Jews prosperous and self-contented in the world which was theirs to conquer- if they had walked in step with God's plans, rather than being such easily contented, materialistic satisficers. Micah 7:11-13 RV seems to comment upon this wasted potential: "A day for building thy walls! In that day shall the decree [of Cyrus, to return and build the temple] be far extended. In that day shall they [the returning Jews] come unto thee [Zion] from Assyria... even to the river [all the places where the Jews were in captivity]... *yet shall the land be desolate*". In other words, the Jews are prophesied as returning, and yet that was a potential prophecy; the prophet foresaw that despite his prophecy and all that it enabled, the possible future it declared for Judah- yet the land would be [relatively] desolate, for most would not return. It's rather like Ez. 36:35,38 prophesying how the Jews would return from captivity and rebuild the waste places of Jerusalem- and yet Hag. 1:4 laments that the temple lay "waste" [s.w.] because the returned exiles were too lazy to rebuild it. The prophecy of Ezekiel was there for the fulfilling- but they chose not to. And how many prophecies are there which we likewise are too preoccupied and self-centred to reach out and fulfil?

We have to enquire, and enquire deeply, of our own lives- how much potential deliverance has God set up for us, that we refuse to be part of? To what extent has self-satisfaction, comfortable living, the acceptance we have in human society... lead to us failing to grasp the call of God?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1-1Esther_In_Weakness.htm

James 1

By the hills of human pride being brought down, and the giving of confidence to those so low in the valleys of hopelessness and lack of self respect, there is a levelling of all those who respond to Christ. But more than this; in this lifting up of the hopeless and bringing down of the proud, there is a foretaste of what will happen in the future day of judgment. In essence, "we make the answer now" by whether or not we bring down our pride, or whether we summon the faith in God's grace and imputed righteousness to believe that we, who are nothing, are lifted up in His sight. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low" (James 1:9-10).

There are many brethren and sisters who live lowly lives, stuck in the lowest levels of society, living as they do with grim acceptance of their lot, who struggle with this: that they, really and truly, are seen as clothed with Christ, that they will be without fault before the

throne. Or there are others who feel that their past failures really make it hard for them to ever be accepted by God. But believe it! This *is* how God eagerly sees you! We *will* be in His Kingdom, by grace...these are the valleys that must be exalted. And there are so many of us whose mountains of pride must be pulled down to the same level, by the same Gospel. If this happens, we will not need the 'bringing down' of condemnation. Flesh must be humbled- either we do it now, we humble ourselves that we may be exalted in due time; or it will have to be done to us through the terror of rejection. Time and again 'bringing low' or 'humiliation' is the result of condemnation (Dt. 28:43; 2 Chron. 28:19; Job 40:12; Ps. 106:43).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-14When_Israel_Was_A_Child.htm

8 Dec

Job 10

Job felt that " though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul" (Job 9:21)- he felt the impossibility of trusting his own conscience. He felt he wasn't perfect, and that he was condemned (Job 9:20; 10:2)- although actually God saw him as perfect (1:2). Job felt that God was searching around for his every sin (Job 10:6)- although compare this with how positively God spoke to Satan about him. Clearly God in His grace was more positive about Job than he himself was. Let that encourage you today!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-2The_Grace_Of_God.htm

Mic 6

delights in showing forgiveness and mercy; He loves doing it (Mic. 7:18). As a French proverb says, it's " *son metier*" - 'what He's good at, and loves doing'. Let's try to catch something of this spirit of the grace of God. Let's try to adopt God's perspective. For what does He require more of a man, " but to do justly, and to *love* mercy (as God does, 7:18), and to walk humbly with thy God" ? (Mic. 6:8).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-12-3-2The_Grace_Of_God.htm

James 2

The command to love our neighbour as ourselves is given an equivalent under the new Covenant: to love our brother or sister in the ecclesia as ourselves. Gal. 5:14 and James 2:8 quote this command in the context of ecclesial life. So to love God and Christ is to love our neighbour as ourselves. This is because of the intense unity of God's Name. Because our brethren and sisters share God's Name, as we do, we must love them as ourselves, who also bear that same Name. And if we love the Father, we must love the Son, who bears His Name, with a similar love. The letters of John state this explicitly. If we love God, we *must* love our brother; and if we love the Father, we *must* love the Son.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-6-2unity_of_god.htm

9 Dec

Job 11

The love of Christ was shown in His cross; and through the Spirit's enlightenment we can *know* the height, length, breadth of that love (Eph. 3:18,19). But this passage in Ephesians is building on Job 11:7-9: " Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea" . The purpose of the connection is to show that through appreciating the love of Christ, unknowable to the unenlightened mind, we see the Almighty unto perfection, in a way which the Old Testament believers were unable to do. It was as high as Heaven, and what could they do? And yet it must be confessed that we do not in practice attain to such fullness of knowledge and vision. We look to the Kingdom, one of the excellencies of which will be the full grasp of the Almighty unto perfection, as manifest in the death of His Son. All we *now* know is that that cross was the fullness of God, it was " the Almighty unto perfection" . But then, we shall know, we shall find it out. And yet, paradoxically, in some sense even now we can *know* "the love of Christ" [a phrase often used about the cross] that *passes* human knowledge. Speaking of His upcoming death, the Lord warned that where he was going, the disciples could not then follow; but they would, afterwards. This doesn't necessarily mean they too were to die the death of the cross. Rather could it mean that they later would enter into what His death really meant; then they would see with some understanding, rather than run away from the vision of the cross. And for us, one of the Kingdom's riches will likewise be that we shall then understand that final climactic act the more fully. Yet we begin that discovery now.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/3-3constrained_by_the_love_of_christ.htm

Mic 7

Rolling naked in the dust...this was the extent of Micah's passion for the repentance of his audience. He comes to the point where he would fain make sacrifice for Israel, even to the point of offering his firstborn son, so strongly did he take upon himself the sins of his people. But he tells Israel that even this will be no good; they must repent themselves: " Wherewith shall I come before the Lord...shall I come before him with burnt offerings....shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?...what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly...and to humble thyself [in repentance]" (6:6-8). In all this, Micah came close to the spirit of the Father and Son. For the Father would give His firstborn for their sin. Like the Father and Son, he came looking for fruit on the vine of Israel: " my soul desired the firstripe fruit" (Mic. 7:1). This chapter goes on to describe God warning Micah of how Israel would betray him and seek to kill him, despite his love for them, in language evidently prophetic of the Lord's sacrifice. Thus in Micah's love for Israel, in the depth of his appreciation of the reality of judgment to come which gave him such motivation to preach, he came to know the spirit of Christ crucified in the depth of his zeal to appeal to them. And we too know with quite some accuracy the judgment to come upon Israel and our fellow man. We cannot know this and knowingly tut tut to each other about it, and do sweet nothing about it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-10Motivation_To_Preach.htm

James 3, 4

We must be God's in practice *because* He is our creator. So it is not that we merely believe in creation rather than evolution; more than this, such belief in creation must elicit a life given

over to that creator. God as creator created man in His own image; and therefore we shouldn't curse men (James 3:9). By reason of the image they bear, we are to act to all men as we would to God Himself; we are not to treat some men as we would animals, who are not in the image of God. Because we are made in God's image, we should therefore not kill other humans (Gen. 9:6). James says the same, in essence, in teaching that because we are in God's image, we shouldn't curse others. To curse a man is to kill him. That's the point of James' allusion to Genesis and to God as creator. Quite simply, respect for the person of others is inculcated by sustained reflection on the way that they too are created in God's image.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-3God_As_Creator.htm

10 Dec

Job 12

Job 12:24 shows that there's an element to which the human mind, like the heart of kings, is under God's direct control. He *can* influence our thinking and mindsets and worldviews; just as He made Joseph forget all the pain of his former experiences.

Nah 1, 2

Nahum's message was not only a warning of judgment to come upon Nineveh. It was an appeal to Israel, that unless they repented, they would likewise perish. The appeal to Judah to "perform thy vows" (Nah. 1:15) is couched in the very same words as Jonah used in Jonah 2:9: "I will pay [s.w. perform] that which I have vowed". Judah were being asked to be like Jonah, and not despise Nineveh, but rather appeal to her to repent. Time and again, our spiritual tests are framed in terms of Biblical precedents, to provide us with strength to decide rightly- if we will take that strength.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/12-4Jonah_And_Nahum.htm

James 5

Those who speak strong words with Divine oaths will 'fall under judgment' for those words (James 5:12 RV); if they don't use them, they won't have to have them considered at the judgment. And thus "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips [in this life] shall have destruction" at judgment day (Prov. 13:3). Our words really can lead to our salvation or rejection... they're that important.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

11 Dec

Job 13

The Greek word translated "conscience", *sun-eidesis*, means literally a co-perception. It implies that there are two types of perception within the believer- human perception, and spiritual perception. The conscience that is cleansed in Christ, that is at peace, will be a conscience that keeps those two perceptions, of the real self and of the persona, in harmony.

What we know and perceive humanly, is in harmony with we spiritually perceive. Our conscience, our co-perception, our real self, makes sense of the human perceptions and interprets them in a spiritual way. So, a young man sees an attractive girl. His human perception signals certain things to his brain- to lust, covet, etc. But his co-perception, his conscience, his real self, handles all that, and sees the girl's beauty for just simply what it is- beauty. Job before his 'conversion' paralleled his eye and his ear: "Mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it" (Job 13:1). He was so sure that what he heard was what he saw; he was sure that his perceptions were operating correctly. But later, he comes to see a difference between his eye and his ear. He says that he had only heard of God by the ear; but only now, he says, "mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42:5). He had heard words, but, he realized, he'd not properly 'seen' or perceived. Finally, he had a properly functioning 'conscience', a co-perception. What he saw, was what he really heard.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/a4The_Real_Self.htm

Nah 3

Nahum 3:9 describes Nineveh's power as "infinite" (Nah. 3:9). This is how it appeared from the standpoint of a Jew in puny Israel; ultimately, from God's perspective, Nineveh's power was anything but infinite. God adopts a human perspective- as He does in our lives today, as He watches them with compassion and feeling for how *we* see things.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/dbb/2-2-1-5god_adopts_a_human_perspective.htm

1 Pet 1

The trials of our faith are like fire which purifies us (1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12). And yet this is the language of the last judgment (Mal. 3:1,2). In our response to trials, we have the outcome of our judgment. We must rejoice *now* in our tribulations with the same joy which we will have when we are accepted by the Lord at the last day (1 Pet. 4:13). Job felt that his calamities were God entering into judgment with him (Job 14:3). If we react properly to trials, we thereby receive now "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:9). Thus the question of the degree to which we now are 'saved' is connected with the fact that to some degree, the judgment process is also going on now. If we continue faithful under tribulation, this "is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer" (2 Thess. 1:5). It is a foretaste of judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_1.htm

12 Dec

Job 14

Job seems to oscillate between believing and not believing in the resurrection (consider Job 14:7-15). At the end, Job confesses he has not spoken the right things; and Yahweh then says that he has only spoken that which was right. The friends likewise said some true things and some false things; and yet because they did not repent, their bad words were remembered against them. The final revealing of Yahweh in Job was some kind of judgment day for all

concerned. Job, the righteous, had only his good deeds and words remembered; whereas the wicked friends had only their bad words remembered.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_4.htm

Hab 1

God's oscillations of feelings, the sharp opposition between judgment and mercy, were felt equally by the prophets, who were breathing in God's spirit. Consider all the other oppositions and paradoxes which there were in the prophetic experience:

- Speaking for God against Israel, when they themselves were members of Israel
- Appearing to be on the side of their own peoples' enemies
- Holding an understanding of Israel's God that was contradictory to Israel's own understanding of their God
- Understanding why judgment should come, and yet like Habakkuk crying out with the question "Why?" (Hab. 1:2-4). After twice approaching God with this question, and each time being given fresh insights into the awful nature of the judgment to come as a response, Habakkuk ends up with a trembling body and lips that 'quivered at the sound'... and yet, at the very same time, feels that he still "will rejoice in the Lord" (Hab. 3:16,18). What a torn man he was; and we are too, in many ways, in this world today.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/15-10-7.htm>

1 Pet 2

The word is to be made flesh in us as it was in the Lord; theory turned to practice, knowledge into experience. "The word" in the New Testament often refers to the basic Gospel rather than every inspired word which there is in the whole Bible. "The word of God (a title of Jesus)...the word of the Lord...is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23,25 RV). It is this word of the basic Gospel which is the "milk of the word" which enables us to "put away therefore all malice...guile...hypocrisies" (1 Pet. 2:1,2). And having spoken of tasting / drinking the word of God (the same figure is in Heb. 6:5), Peter then speaks of tasting the grace of the Lord Jesus (2:3). He is the word of the Gospel made flesh - to taste His Gospel, the word, is to taste of Him.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/1-6The_Doctrine_Of_Christ.htm

13 Dec

Job 15

"Dost thou hearken in the council of God?" (Job 15:8 RVmg.) implies there is an Angelic court in Heaven, where our lives and issues are discussed before God. Note how this is said in the context of Job, where we have the most classic statement of the operation of the court of heaven in the opening chapters. So let's not feel ignored by God today!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

Hab 2

If the inspired word of God is made plain, then he who understands it will "run" in response to it (Hab. 2:2). A true understanding of the word of God for what it is will be related to realistic response to it. Insofar as we believe that the Bible is inspired, we will feel the passion and power of it the more, and thereby its impact upon us will be the greater. "Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven [therefore] ye shall not make with me gods of silver" (Ex. 20:22,23). Because of the wonder of having heard God's voice, therefore idolatry of any form will be meaningless for us.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-8-1Inspired_Infallible_Word_Of_God.htm

1 Pet 3-5

Time and again the NT warns against elders who would be motivated by the love of "filthy lucre" rather than the Lord Jesus and His people (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2). The Greek translated "filthy lucre" is hard to understand; it doesn't just mean 'money'. It suggests profit that is somehow filthy, morally disgusting. This is what money turns into, in God's eyes, when men so love it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-11-3The_Snare_Of_Riches.htm

14 Dec

Job 16, 17

Stephen's enemies "gnashed on him with their teeth", and his Biblical mind would therefore have raced to Job 16:9, describing the behaviour of the wicked towards the faithful: "He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth". The context goes on: "Now, behold, my witness is in heaven and my record is on high" (v. 19). Surely Stephen had thought ahead to this, for as his enemies gnashed their teeth against him, "he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). He looked up to Heaven and saw His witness, faithful and true, standing there as he expected. According to our reflection upon God's word, so we will find encouragement in today's trials.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

Hab 3

God clave the rock and there came out rivers (Hab. 3:9; Ps. 78:16,20; Is. 43:20). Each part of Israel's encampment had the water as it were brought to their door. And so it is in our experience of Christ, and the blessing enabled by His sacrifice. For 1 Cor. 10 reasons that the smitten rock represents the smiting of the Lord Jesus. The blessings that come to us are deeply personal, and directed to us individually. He died once, long ago, and yet the effect of His sacrifice is ever new. In our experience, it's as if He has died and risen for us every time we obtain forgiveness, or any other grace to help in our times of need. We live in newness of

life. The cross is in that sense ongoing; He dies and lives again for every one who comes to Him. And yet at the end of their wilderness journey, Moses reflected that Israel had forgotten the rock that had given them birth. The water had become such a regular feature of their lives that they forgot the rock in Horeb that it flowed from. They forgot that 'Horeb' means 'a desolate place', and yet they had thankfully drunk of the water the first time in Rephidim, 'the place of comfort'. We too have done the same, but the length of time we have done so can lead us to forget the smitten rock, back there in the loneliness and desolation of Calvary.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/9.htm>

2 Pet 1, 2

The wicked will be “overthrown” in the final condemnation (2 Pet. 2:6)- but this is the very same word used for ‘apostasy’ (Strong’s) or ‘subversion’ (2 Tim. 2:14). If we apostatize, we are overthrowing or condemning ourselves ahead of time. Israel in the wilderness "rejected" the land- and so they didn't enter it (Num. 14:31 RV). The condemned amongst the first century ecclesias "cast themselves away through the error of Balaam" (Jude 11 RVmg.)- and yet it is the Lord who will "cast away" the bad fish in the last day. Yet those He casts away have in fact cast themselves away. Only those who condemn themselves will be condemned... which is both challenging and comforting.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_3.htm

15 Dec

Job 18, 19

Bildad's words about the wicked in Job 18:4,7,16 [by whom he meant Job] are used by God in inspiring Paul to write about the wicked Jews in Romans. The point is that God uses even human weakness, the words of anger and misunderstanding said by Bildad, and weaves it into His purpose and saving revelation to humanity.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/3-3-3Job_And_Israel.htm

Zeph 1

The breaking of bread is a further stage along one of two roads. Indeed, the Lord's supper is a place to which the rejected are invited (Zeph. 1:7,8; Rev. 19:7), or the redeemed (Rev. 3:20). Like the cup of wine, symbolizing both blessing and condemnation, being invited to the Lord's supper is a double symbol.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-6trial_of_jealousy.htm

2 Pet 3

We must spread the good news to the whole world, for *all* men's sins were conquered on the cross. God is eager that none should perish, but all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:8); and seeing that we preach “the Gospel of God” (1 Thess. 2:2), the God who is “the saviour of all men”, we likewise must offer this Gospel to as many as possible. Again, the motivation for world-wide preaching did not change at the end of the first century. To limit our

preaching is to limit God; and limit Him we can, seeing that His purpose works in harmony with human freewill decisions. The urgency which shines through Paul's thinking here is just as true today, if not more so. " The day of salvation" was not just in the first century; it is now as well.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/books/ww/20.htm>

16 Dec

Job 20

Contrast Elihu's claim to be speaking as a result of God's spirit within him (32:8), with how Zophar and the friends spoke from their *own* spirit (20:3). With whose spirit are we going to speak today? Man's words tend to hurt by their misunderstanding, as did those of the 'friends'.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/3-2-3Role_Of_Elihu_In_Job.htm

Zeph 2

Our innermost desires, our complaints, our situations, our deeply concealed attitudes, are read by God as if they are prayers, and answered accordingly. He sees us as asking for things which we perhaps can't even visualize (e.g. Ps. 106:44 cp. Is. 64:3), or having confidence in prayer which we certainly don't feel. How God saw Hezekiah's attitude to Sennacherib is a clear example. Yet God not only sees the thoughts and attitudes of His children like this. He describes Himself as " hearkening" to the mocking of Moab (Zeph. 2:8); and God hearkening is the language of responding to prayer. The wicked afflicting the poor, for example, leads to God hearing the cry of the poor (Job 34:28). The implication is that the nature of the situation, not just the fervency of their specific prayers, makes God respond. This very day, God is watching and thereby hearing, and responding, to all in our lives.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2-2prayer_in_the_spirit.htm

1 Jn 1, 2

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, as he walked" (1 Jn. 2:6) uses the same word as in the record of Peter's walking on water with Jesus, making it possible that John is upholding Peter's example for us all. For many, our conversions were relatively painless; indeed, for those raised in the faith, it may have been easier to get baptized than to walk away from it. But the essentially radical invitation to follow Jesus is repeated in later life; and the validity of our earlier choice to follow is put to the test by our later response to the same invitation.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/13-7Walking_On_Water.htm

17 Dec

Job 21

The priests of Israel later said: " It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" (Mal.3:14). Elihu claimed that Job " hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that

he should delight himself in God" (34:9)- i.e. keep the commands of God, seeing that the Hebrew for "delight" often occurs in the context of obedience to the word. The Malachi passage is more specifically alluding to Job 21:7,15: "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" . These are the words of Job, complaining about the prosperity of the wicked who had such an attitude, and the carefree happiness of their lives: "Their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ" (21:11,12). It is in this that the Malachi context is so significant, for Mal.3:15 continues : "We (the Israelites) call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up" . This was also Job's view. Notice that Job is probably implying that his prosperous three friends were among the wicked whom he is describing, thus associating them with the corrupt Jewish priesthood. Today it seems that investment for God is meaningless and pointless; we are surrounded by those who invest their time and resources for themselves. Yet here's the challenge- such behaviour is wickedness before God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/3-3-2Job_As_Priest.htm

Zeph 3

God's judgments are daily revealed, but the unworthy aren't shamed by them (Zeph. 3:5); they aren't convicted by them to the extent that they realize their condemnation and repent; and therefore they will be shamed in the final, unalterable verdict (Dan. 12:2). They could cover their shame now (Rev. 3:18)- but they chose not to. And yet, unknown to them, in God's eyes these people foam out their own shame (Jude 13). We live this day as men and women under judgment.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

1 Jn 3, 4

Note the grace reflected in Jn. 12:42, where we read that some Jews were credited with having believed in Jesus, even though they did *not* confess Him (Jn. 12:42), presumably because those who confessed Jesus as Christ were excommunicated from the synagogues (Jn. 9:22). Those will not confess Jesus are antichrist (1 Jn. 4:3)- and yet the inspired record is so eager to note that these weak 'believers' were still believers, and their weak faith appears still to have been credited to them. This is a comfort to us in the weakness of our faith- and yet also a challenge to us to accept weak believers as believers.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment1_2.htm

18 Dec

Job 22

Trials and reproofs from God are Him "entering with thee into judgment", here and now (Job 22:4). How we respond to them is a foretaste of judgment day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_1.htm

Hag 1, 2

Hag. 1:2 rebuked the people for saying “the time is not come... that the Lord’s house should be built”. They didn’t want the prophecy to be fulfilled, because it would mean ‘going up’ from their ceiled houses- both in Babylon and in the farmsteads they had built in Judah- to build the temple. And how do we *really* feel about the ending of this system, in the coming of God’s Kingdom?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_Of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

1 Jn 5

If we love the Father, we must love all those whom He has begotten (1 Jn. 5:1,2). We can't be introverted Christians. If we love the children of God, this is the proof that we truly love God. We simply can't claim to love the Father and Son if we have the 'private people' mindset.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/3-10Introverted_Christians.htm

Dec. 19

Job 23,24

Job came to long for the judgment seat. There are few believers who have reached that level of intimacy with God- but Job did, thanks to the way his friends so cruelly turned against him. And this is a major lesson we can take from being the victim of slander, misunderstanding and misjudgment by our own brethren. Job 23:3 perhaps epitomizes this desire of Job for judgment day: “Oh, that today I might find him, that I might come to his judgment seat!” (NAB). He wanted the judgment seat to come that very day! The invisible hand of God is working in every life that suffers from ones’ brethren ‘playing God’ in false judgment of us... to lead us to this wonderful and blessed attitude.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/3-2-1The_Conversion_Of_Job.htm

Zech.1

Time and again in the context of the restoration it is emphasized that God would return to His people if they returned to Him (Zech. 1:3; Mal. 3:7). And they didn't return to Him- most chose not to return to the land, and those who did for the most part did not return to their God in their hearts. The whole basis of Israel's covenant relationship with God was that if they were exiled from the land for their sins, they must repent and *then* God would return to them (Dt. 30:1-10). Yet God graciously states to the exiles: "I am returned unto you" (Zech. 1:16; 8:3). Here was grace indeed. And we stand related to that same grace today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_Of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

2 & 3 John

The knowledge and experience of the Lord's exaltation can only be witnessed to; it can't be kept quiet. 3 Jn. 7 refers to how the great preaching commission was obeyed: " For his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing (material help) from the Gentiles" (Gentile believers). For the excellence of knowing His Name they went forth in witness, and moreover were generous spirited, not taking material help to enable this. The knowledge of the Name of

itself should inspire to active service: for the sake of the Lord's Name the Ephesians laboured (Rev. 2:3).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-25Jesus_Is_Lord.htm

Dec. 20

Job 25-27

There is quite some internal evidence that the book of Job preceded Moses, or was just before his time. If this is so, Israel's appreciation of Job 26:12 would have been proportional to their faith in the Red Sea deliverance: "He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud [Egyptians]". God provides us daily with experiences which we are meant to interpret in the light of incidents in His word.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-10-2Spiritual_Potential.htm

Zech. 2,3

Zech. 2:5 had prophesied that Yahweh would be a wall of fire around Jerusalem at the time of the restoration. But He allowed and even enabled the fearful Jews to build a human wall for defence in the time of Nehemiah. The higher level would have been for them to have set their trust in these words of prophecy. Will we take God at His word today, or take a lower level?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/2-7-1Concessions_To_Human_Weakness.htm

Jude

Abraham saved Lot out of Sodom by his earnest prayer for him; and there is ample reason to think from the Genesis record and his subsequent reaction to the Angel's invitation to leave that Lot of himself was simply not strong enough. Without those prayers and the concern of Abraham read by God as prayer, Lot may well have been left to suffer the condemnation of the world he preferred to live in. And yet Lot fleeing from Sodom is used in the NT as a type of our latter day exit from the world at the Lord's coming. Is this not to suggest that the latter day believers will be saved only by grace, they will not be strong and ready to leave; and their salvation will only be on account of the prayers of the faithful? Lot was not without spirituality; but he was simply swamped by the pull of the world in which he had become entangled, not to mention his unspiritual wife. He was the type on which one could have compassion, making a difference, and pull out of the fire. Indeed, it could even be that Jude's words about pulling a brother out of the fire may be a reference back to Lot being pulled out of the fire that came upon Sodom. Those in his position sin a sin which is not unto death only in the sense that we can pray for them, so that their sin will not lead them to condemnation. But only in this sense is sin not unto death; for the wages of sin, any sin, is death (Rom. 6:23). But in some cases this sentence can ultimately be changed on account of our effort for our brother. How much effort, therefore, should we make!

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/1-3-1Moments_Of_Faith.htm

Dec. 21

Job 28

The fear or worship of Yahweh is paralleled with "to depart from evil" (Job 28:28); one cannot know / fear Him and remain in the ways of sin. Worship, singing catchy worship tunes to ourselves, must be meaningfully done if it is to lead in practice to a departing from evil.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Zech. 4,5

The "great mountain" of Babylon was to become a plain before Zerubbabel (Zech. 4:7)- a clear allusion to Dan. 2:44, in which the little stone of Messiah destroys the Kingdoms of men and becomes a great mountain to replace the statue headed by Babylon. But Zerubbabel didn't destroy Babylon- according to Jewish tradition he returned there after 'giving up' in Jerusalem. Perhaps Zech. 11:16 refers to him as "the worthless shepherd" who didn't gather "those that be scattered", who didn't encourage the Jews scattered in Babylon to return to the fold of Zion, and who didn't care for their spiritual wellbeing. And so the prophecy that Babylon would be destroyed before Zerubbabel has to be reapplied, and will be fulfilled at the return of the Lord Jesus. Will we fulfil God's potential for us today- or will He have to re-fulfil His intentions for us in someone else?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-7-2Zerubabel_Potential_Messiah.htm

Rev. 1,2

The greatest evidence against the view that we must maintain a totally pure fellowship is to be found in the letters to the seven ecclesias in Rev. 2 and 3. The "few" in Sardis who had not defiled their clothes attended an apostate ecclesia; and yet they are *not* seen as "defiled" by the Lord Jesus (Rev. 3:4). This is proof positive that there is no such thing as guilt by association with erring members of an ecclesia. Those faithful members were not rebuked for not disfellowshipping the others. The Lord's criticism of the ecclesias seems to be that they had allowed false teaching to develop, rather than the fact they hadn't separated from it. Smyrna was an ecclesia which received no criticism at all from the Lord; they weren't rebuked for not disfellowshipping the other local ecclesias who were apostate (Rev. 2:8-11). The elders at Sardis, an ecclesia holding many false teachers, were told to strengthen what remained (the Greek is usually used regarding people)- they were to strengthen the faithful minority, but nothing was said about withdrawing from them because they fellowshipped weak brethren.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/7-6Christadelphian_Divisions.htm

Dec. 22

Job 29,30

It's so awesome that the court of Heaven (Hebrew word *sod*, 'council' or 'court') is something open to us as mortals. In Biblical times, Kings had their *sod*, their gathering of intimate advisors and ministers. But *we*, mere mortals on earth, are invited to be part of the *sod* of God Almighty, having His purpose and plans revealed to us (Job 29:4). But *sod* members weren't passive listeners; they gave their advice and requests, and the King factored that into His

decision making. This is a picture of the power of prayer from those who have understood the way and essence of the King of Heaven.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/angels/angels4.htm>

Zech. 6,7

It has been said that Judah rejected idolatry on their return from Babylon. I submit that Biblical evidence is different. They mixed pagan thinking with their form of Judaism, and although physical idols were rejected, the results of this idolatry by the early returnees influenced Judaism permanently. Thus Zech. 6:1 pictures Yahweh's cherubim, Angelic chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains. In the ancient Near East there was the common idea that the sun god appeared each morning in his chariot from between two mountains. Zechariah's point [as is the point of Psalm 19, which uses the same images] is that it is the God of Israel who is the God of the sun, and not Shamash or some such similar deity of men's imagination. But the exiles clearly needed this reminder; we remember how only a generation or so before, Ezekiel found them worshipping the sun god in Yahweh's temple. And earlier, Josiah had removed the "chariots of the sun" from the temple mount (2 Kings 23:11). Yet it seems that the Jews' desire to mix Yahweh's temple with the sun god was still just as strong even after the exiles returned. Note how Zech. 6:10 still calls the returned community "the exiles"- as if to suggest that they still had the mentality with which they went into captivity. The temptation to mix flesh and spirit is simply very powerful, and recurs daily in our lives in various forms. In those temptations we face what the exiles faced- a desire to appear faithful to God externally whilst doing exactly what they wanted, influenced by the world around them. In Zech. 7:1-6 we have the record of the delegation from Bethel, who come to enquire whether they should keep fasting for the temple to be rebuilt, as they had done for the last 70 years. God's answer is that they hadn't really fasted for Him. They'd fasted, publically appearing to love the temple and the idea of a restored Kingdom... but in reality they had not done it *for God*, but somehow for themselves.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-6-1Weakness_Of_Judah_Under_Nehemiah.htm

Rev. 3,4

If we appreciate the suddenness of the Lord's coming, that one day will be our last, one day we will put our clothes on, eat breakfast...for the *last* time, and then the judgment; this of itself, the Lord Himself reasons, ought to result in us holding on (Rev. 3:3,11). Likewise Paul argues that the opposite of falling away is living by faith in the fact that one day, He who is prophesied to return will really return (Heb. 10:37,38 cp. Hab. 2:3,4).

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/enduring_to_the_end.htm

Dec. 23

Job 31,32

Job 31:24,25,28 speak in dire and chilling terms of trusting in wealth- and note that these words come from a rich believer who lost it all: "had I put my trust in gold, or called fine gold my security [cp. assurance and insurance policies, bank balances, portfolios of investments... banknotes stored under the carpet, jewellery hidden in a corner of some

peasant home]... this would be a crime for condemnation; for I should have denied God above". It's noteworthy that Job claims that despite having been the wealthiest man in the Middle East, he never put his trust in it. But that shouldn't lead us to think that we can so easily handle the possession of wealth. For to possess wealth leads most people to trust in it. And if we do this... this is a crime calling for our condemnation, it's a denial of God, an effective atheism. Attitudes to wealth are that important.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/24Funding_Mission_Work.htm

Zech. 8

The language of Israel's return from captivity as found in Isaiah and Ezekiel all has evident reference to the second coming and the final establishment of the Kingdom. It isn't just that Israel's return under Ezra and Zerubbabel was a type of that final homecoming. It could have been the Kingdom- had they obeyed the prophecies. It was all about a potential Kingdom of God. But they were too caught up with their own self-interest, with building their own houses rather than God's; and so it was all deferred. Using the prophetic perfect, God had prophesied that at the time of the restoration, He would come and dwell in rebuilt Zion (Zech. 8:3)- just as Ezekiel's prophecy had concluded: "The name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there" (Ez. 48:35). Clearly, Ezekiel's prophecies could have been fulfilled at the restoration; God was willing that they should be. But human apathy and self-interest stopped it from happening as it could have done. Let this be a warning to us today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/11-5Potential_Kingdom_Of_God.htm

Rev. 5,6

I observe in many converts something which was also in me for far too long: a perception of the Lord Jesus as somehow passive, sitting dutifully at the Father's right hand until the day on the calendar comes when He will return to take us unto Himself. This really couldn't be further from the truth. The Spirit of Jesus is *so* active. *All* power has been given to Him; He it is who opens the seals so that world history can progress (Rev. 6). The essence of our belief, our being 'in the Truth', being Christians, Bible students (however you want to term it)- is a personal relationship with the Father and Son. It really isn't enough to see the Lord Jesus as a theological concept called 'Christ', a black box in our brain marked 'Jesus', who of necessity had our nature, who overcame it as our representative, and therefore opened up the way of salvation for those who identify themselves with Him. This is all vitally true; but just as cold theology, it won't save anyone. It must be so deeply believed, that the saving power of the Lord's character and the great salvation He is achieving is known *now* in our humbled souls, and reflected in our thinking and being. The idea of a *relationship* with Him, of Him actually *doing* things for us now, seems to be something we shy away from.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-7The_Spirit_Of_Jesus.htm

Dec. 24

Job 33

It is hard to appreciate that the parable of the lost son really is intended to be read as having some reference to our daily turning back from our sins- such is the emotional intensity of the

story. Yet such is the seriousness of sin that we must see in it an ideal standard to aim for in this regard. The parable alludes to a passage in Job which helps us better appreciate this. The prodigal's confession " I have sinned...in thy sight" , and his returning from spiritual death to life (Lk. 15:21,32) connect well with Job 33:24-30: " His flesh (of the forgiven sinner) shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth (cp. the prodigal): he shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy...if any say (like the prodigal), I have sinned...and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God *oftentimes* with man" . The prodigal's experience will often be worked out in our lives, the fatted calf slain time and again, and as such we will come to know and appreciate the Father's love even more.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/a2-4The_Fatted_Calf.htm

Zech. 9

The Lord sat upon the donkey, to fulfill the prophecy of Zech. 9:9 that Israel's King would come to them "humble, and riding upon a donkey"- not a warhorse. And, moreover, Zechariah says that He would come commanding peace [and not bloodlust] *to the Gentiles*, with a world-wide dominion from sea to sea, not merely in Palestine. Those who perceived the Lord's allusion to Zechariah 9 would have realized this was what His acted parable was trying to tell them- the Lord Jesus was not out to destroy Rome but to bring peace to them as well as all the Gentile world. A humble, lowly king was a paradox which they could not comprehend. A king, especially the Messianic King of Israel, had to be proud and war-like. The crowd must have been so terribly disappointed. He purposefully abased Himself and sat upon a donkey. This Jesus whom they had liked and loved and hoped in, turned out to totally and fundamentally *not* be the person they thought He was- despite Him so patiently seeking to show them who He really was for so long. He had become an image in their own minds, of their own creation, convenient to their own agendas- and when the truth dawned on them, that He was *not* that person, their anger against Him knew no bounds. The Russian atheist Maxim Gorky commented, in terrible language but with much truth in it, that man has created God in his own image and after his own likeness. And for so many, this is indeed the case. The image of Jesus which the crowds had was only partially based on who He really was. Some things they understood right, but very much they didn't. And they turned away in disgust and anger when they realized how deeply and basically they had misunderstood Him. They angrily commented: "Who is this son of man?" (Jn. 12:34). In that context, Jesus had not said a word about being "son of man". But they were effectively saying: 'What sort of Messiah / son of man figure is this? We thought you were the son-of-man Messiah, who would deliver us right now. Clearly you're not the type of Messiah / Christ we thought you were'.

All this would explain perfectly why the awful torture and mocking of Jesus in His time of dying was based around His claims to be a King. The crown of thorns, the mock-royal robe, the 'sceptre' put in His hand, then taken away and used to beat Him with, the mocking title over His body "This is the King of the Jews", the anger of the Jewish leaders about this even being written as it was, the jeers of the crowd about this "King"- all this reflects the extent of anger there was with the nature of His 'Kingship'. All the parables and teaching about the true nature of His Kingship / Kingdom had been totally ignored. The Lord had told them plainly enough. But it hadn't penetrated at all... The Lord was not only misunderstood by the crowds, but His very being amongst men had provoked in them a crisis of conscience; and their response was to repress that conscience. As many others have done and do to this

day, they had shifted their discontent onto an innocent victim, artificially creating a culprit and stirring up hatred against him. Their angry turning against Him was therefore a direct outcome of the way He had touched their consciences.

Such tragic misunderstanding of persons occurs all the time, to varying intensities.

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/20-17.htm>

Rev. 7-9

The rejected will seek death and hope for it, because existence in the state of condemnation is simply unbearable. But remember that outside of Christ, mankind is likewise in such an unbearable state, if only he will perceive it. He is even now in a figurative furnace of fire. Those who in that day will "seek death" (Rev. 9:6) are those whose materialistic behaviour in this life was effectively a seeking of death (Prov. 21:6). They were and are living out the condemnation experience right now.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_6.htm

Dec. 25

Job 34

The wicked afflicting the poor leads to God hearing the cry of the poor (Job 34:28). The implication is that the nature of the situation, not just the fervency of their specific prayers, makes God respond. Our innermost desires, our complaints, our situations, our deeply concealed attitudes, are read by God as if they are prayers, and answered accordingly.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/2-2prayer_in_the_spirit.htm

Zech. 10

Even though we may have daily bread, we are still to pray for it. It's rather like Zech. 10:1: "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain"; even when it's the season, still ask Him for what it appears you naturally already have.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pr/3-4prayer_for_the_coming_of_the_king.htm

Rev. 10,11

'How are you today?...Oh fine, I went to church last night...Yes? Oh, that's nice...', these conversations have no meaning, they are merely a passage of words, a kicking time as we both watch the wheels of life go round; whereas in the urgency of our task to convert men and women, we must be stopping them in their tracks, arresting their attention. To hold and present the Truth of God, with all its exclusivity, its implicit criticism of all that isn't true, *in a genuine humility*...this has a drawing power all of its own. The two witnesses of Rev. 11:3 make their witness [and will make it during the latter day tribulation?] "clothed in sackcloth"- a symbol of repentance and recognition of sin (Gen. 37:34; Jer 4:8; Jonah 3:5; Mk. 2:20). Their own personal repentance and acceptance of God's gracious forgiveness was the basis of their appeal to others. And is it going too far to understand that if these "two witnesses" do

indeed represent the latter day witness of true Christianity, it will be made on the basis of a genuine repentance by us, brought about by the experiences of the holocaust to come?

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

Dec. 26

Job 35,36

Job recognized that if we are righteous, we give nothing to God (Job 35:7). Our *unrighteousness* commends God's righteousness (Rom. 3:5). All things come *out of* God: "Who hath first given to him? ...for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" (Rom. 11:35,36); it's give, give, give with God. We are the poor beggars sitting down at the great supper, unable to recompense. Of course, it depends where we put the emphasis. The parable which relates how Christ desires fruit from us is followed by that of the marriage supper, where it seems we are just asked to accept an invitation with humility (Mt. 21:34; 22:3). The point surely is that we are invited, for no reason, to the Kingdom, and we must accept with the humility that will accompany a recognition of such grace (Lk. 14:9). But our experience of this grace will inevitably bring forth some spiritual fruit.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-4The_Grace_Of_Jesus.htm

Zech. 11

The word for "glory" in Zech. 11:3 is translated "mantle" elsewhere. When faced with God's glory revealed, Elijah wrapped his face in his own mantle / glory (1 Kings 19:13), rather than face up to the implications of God's glory. A desire for our own glory prevents us perceiving God's glory.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/9-4Elijah_And_Angels.htm

Rev. 12,13

The names of the Roman emperors were to be greatly revered. The cult of emperor worship grew very strongly in the 1st century. Yet Rev. 13:2 describes the names of the leaders of the beast, which on one level represented the Roman empire in the 1st century, as "*blasphemous names*". To assign divine titles to the emperor was, to the Jewish and Christian mind, a blasphemy (Dt. 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:4). This would have made the Apocalypse an outlawed document in the first century. Consider too the clear references to the evil of the emperor worship cult later in Rev. 13: *one of its heads*. . .is set up as the very opposite of the true Christ. Like the Lamb, who was killed and then raised up (5:6), the Beast seems to disappear and then return to life (17:8). This passage may be a reference to some definite event, such as the murder of Caesar and the healing of the empire under Augustus, the legend of *Nero redivivus*, whereby Nero was believed to have returned from the dead. The marvellous cure of the Beast excites admiration and leads to the adoration of the dragon and the Beast (17:8). This is an allusion to the rapid progress of the emperor cult and to the ready acceptance of the immoral example of the emperors. The beast of the earth in Rev. 13:11-18 seems to have some application to the cult of emperor worship which became so popular throughout the Roman empire: it speaks in the voice of the dragon (v. 11), from whom it receives its power; and like the first Beast, it attempts to mimic the Lamb (v. 12, 13). It seems to be a

personification of an Antichrist embodied in the pagan priesthood, which endeavoured to draw all men to the cult of the emperor. In these thoughts we see just how radical was the Apocalypse in its first century context.

“The image to the beast” (13:13) would refer to representations of the divinized Roman emperors. “The wound of the sword” (13:13) is possibly an allusion to the mortal wound Nero inflicted upon himself in ad 68. Nero was perceived to live again in the persecutor Domitian (Tertullian, *Apol.* 5). Note how it is “the beast” who appears to have died or been wounded and then revives (17:8)- and yet these are references to what happened to Nero. The symbolism correctly perceives how the empire was incarnated in one man, the emperor.

We are called to a likewise radical separation from our world-system today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/bl/16-4-5Roman_Empire_And_Christianity.htm

Dec. 27

Job 37

Job 37:23,24 reasons that we *therefore* fear God because God is plenteous in grace and will surely save us and give us forgiveness of sins. This is the very opposite of what is often supposed- that appreciating salvation by grace may lead us to not fear God as we should. But " men do therefore fear him" if they truly grasp the awesome extent of His grace.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/pb/2-16Forgiveness_Of_Sins.htm

Zech. 12

Zech. 12:3 " In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people (i.e. all around Israel, as this often means): all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" . The Septuagint renders the first phrase as " a stone trodden down by the Gentiles" , clearly alluded to by Jesus in His description of Jerusalem being captured by the Gentiles (Luke 21:24). Those who are 'gathered together' against Jerusalem must be the Arabs, according to the other uses of the phrase. These Arab peoples will take Jerusalem, and suffer for it (" burden themselves with it"). The rejected likewise will be burdened with a heavy stone (Mt. 18:6), showing that they will share the judgments of Israel's enemies. All the signs that the Arabs are aiming to take Jerusalem are therefore indicators the Lord will soon be here!

<http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ld/7-2.htm>

Rev. 14

Both the cross and the final judgment (Rev. 14:7,15) are described in John's writings as 'the hour coming'; the parallel language indicates that he presents the cross as the essence of the judgment. By reflecting upon the cross we have a foretaste of our feelings at the last day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/7-4-3cross_and_the_judgment.htm

Dec. 28

Job 38

We can darken God's marvellous light, if we do not properly reflect it. God complained that Job had darkened His word (Job 38:2 NIV); the truths which Job should have taught to his friends he relayed very imperfectly, through the prism and distortion of clinging on to his own traditions and preconceptions of God.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/ww/5-3light_of_the_world.htm

Zech. 13,14

Just before His death, in full knowledge of the disciples' impending collapse of faith, the grace of Jesus confidently spoke of how His men would not follow " a stranger...but will flee from him" (Jn. 10:5). But the disciples fled from their Lord in Gethsemane, as He knew they would (from Zech. 13:7, cp. Mt. 26:31) at the time He said those words. This is all an insight into how positive the Lord Jesus is about His people, and how much He hopes in our faithfulness. Let's not disappoint Him today.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/mm/5-4The_Grace_Of_Jesus.htm

Rev. 15,16

The second coming will be our meeting with the Lord who died for us. To come before Him then will be in essence the same as coming before His cross. Rev. 16 describes the events of the second coming, and yet it is full of allusion back to the cross: "it is done", the temple of heaven opened (16:17); an earthquake (16:18), a cup of wine (16:19). We were redeemed by the blood of Jesus; and yet His return and judgment of us is also our "day of redemption" (Lk. 21:28; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30). Yet that day was essentially the cross; but it is also in the day of judgment. Likewise, we are "justified" by the blood of Jesus. Yet the idea of justification is a declaring righteous after a judgment; as if the cross was our judgment, and through our belief in the Lord we were subsequently declared justified, as we will be in the Last Day.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment7_3.htm

Dec. 29

Job 39

"In nothing *terrified* by your adversaries" (Phil. 1:28) employs a word classically used (although unique in the N.T.) to describe the startled shying of horses, perhaps suggesting Job 39:22, where the horse is said to mock at fear, "and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword". This would be as if Paul is saying 'Don't be terrified horses but like that one spoken of in Job, which represented what, in the Lord's opinion, Job was potentially capable of'. There are other allusions to Job in Philippians chapter 1.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/james/james_d12.html

Mal. 1

The fact God's Name is carried by us, the righteousness of it imputed to us, should lead us to a greater awareness of His grace. To know the name of Yahweh is an imperative to serve Him (1 Chron. 28:9). The greatness of the Name should have led to full and costly sacrifices (Mal. 1:6-8,9-11,14; 2:2). Thinking upon the Name led the faithful to pay their tithes and fellowship with each other (Mal. 3:6,10).

http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/pb/2-7The_Name_Of_Yahweh.htm

Rev. 17,18

If we are not separate from this world now, we will not be separated from them when the judgments fall. If we don't come out from Babylon, we will share her judgments (Rev. 18:4). This is foreshadowed by the way apostate Israel were treated like the surrounding Gentile world in the time of their judgments (Jer. 4:7). Israel worshipped the Babylonian gods, and so they were sent along with Bel their idol to Babylon, where their hearts were. Likewise in the 'judgment day' of AD70, the 'rejected' Jews were sent back into Egypt as slaves. Their condemnation was expressed in terms of an undoing of the redemption from the world which they once experienced. So... this day, will we come out from Babylon, or be like the majority of the exiles, who preferred the soft life there?

http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/mm/1-6-3Condemned_With_The_World.htm

Dec. 30

Job 40

Because God sees and knows absolutely all, we must recognize that He realizes the unspoken implications of our words. Job's words of repentance of Job 40:5 are seen by God as Job effectively condemning God, because presumably they were said merely as a mask over Job's inner feelings that God had been unjust with him (Job 40:8). But when Job uses effectively the same words in Job 42:6, God accepts them. God's ability to see to the core should therefore not only affect our words but elicit in us an honesty of heart behind the words which we use.

http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/pb/2-4God_Sees_And_Knows_All.htm

Mal. 2

It might not be amiss to highlight the areas in which the Jewish priesthood particularly failed:

- The priests " corrupted the covenant of Levi" (Mal. 2:8), in that they married out of the Faith (Neh. 13:29), thus violating the Spirit of the Levitical covenant- which was given in recognition of zealous action against the courting of Gentile women (Num. 25:12,13). A number of prophets condemn the priests for sexual malpractices.
- They offered the blemished sacrifices which Israel presented to them (Mal. 2:8,14). Thus they failed to speak out against the low spiritual standards of their flock, but instead went along with them.

- The repetitive nature of priestly work led them to treat it as " a weariness" , and to concentrate more on their own business enterprises.

- Worst of all, they refused to realize that there was anything wrong with their attitude They became spiritually self-satisfied.

Church life in this century is likewise based around repetition. Malachi's message is for us too. And the very same temptations exist, too. The epistle of James and those to Corinth and the seven churches would indicate that the first century eldership failed in just the same way. Indeed, there are a number of subtle allusions in James back to Malachi and the priesthood just after the restoration.

http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/mm/3-1-2Malachi's_Message.htm

Rev. 19,20

The devil and beast will be cast to the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10), as will all the rejected (Rev. 20:15); they will go to the same place. As Satan is bound (Rev. 20:2), so will the rejected be (Mt. 13:30; 22:13). This will be the antitype of Zedekiah being bound in condemnation (Jer. 52:11). In all these things, we have a choice: to fall on the stone of Christ and be broken, or live proudly in this life without breaking our fleshly ways at all, until at the Lord's coming we are ground to powder (Mt. 21:44). This is an obvious allusion to the image of the Kingdoms of men being ground to powder by the Lord's return. The Lord was saying that if we won't be broken now, then we will share the judgments of the world, and be broken by Him then in condemnation.

http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/judgment/judgment4_8.htm

Dec. 31

Job 41,42

God alone can put a hook in Leviathan's nose (Job 41:2), as He did to Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:28). Leviathan is thus a prototype of the Arab/Assyrian beast of the last days, which is further developed by Daniel and Revelation. But on a simpler level, God's awesome relationship with, and control of, the animal creation should encourage us to believe that there is no human 'beast' in our life that is outside of God's control and influence.

<http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/ld/8-11.htm>

Mal. 3,4

John the Baptist associates his "voice" with the voice of the Elijah prophet crying in the wilderness, and appropriates language from the Elijah prophecy of Mal. 4 to his own preaching. His denial that he was 'that prophet' (Jn. 1:21) therefore reflects a humility in him, a desire for his message to be heard for what it was, rather than any credibility to be given to it because of his office. There's a powerful challenge for today's preacher of the Gospel.

http://www.aeltheiacollege.net/ww/4Preaching_And_Humility.htm

Rev. 21,22

It makes an interesting study to note John's allusions to the cross in Revelation. At the end, he twice says that when he had heard and seen all things, he realized that he was the one who had seen them, and he fell down to worship (Rev. 22:8). 'Heard and seen' is the very language he uses about seeing the cross (Jn. 19:35). His feelings as he beheld the crucified Jesus were those which he had on surveying the whole wonder of God's purpose in Him; it was all made possible by that naked, tortured body. Our reflection, daily, upon the Lord's death should affect our whole worldview; John couldn't write anything without some allusion to it.

http://www.aletheiacollege.net/cross/8Cross_John_Gospel.htm