

March 1

Balak had not succeeded in getting Balaam to curse the people of Israel, but the women of Moab and Midian did bring about destruction. They came into the camp of Israel and had sex with the men. Sex is both pleasurable and powerful. When used in a God-approved way (a man and a woman in marriage), it brings honor and praise to God. When used in a way that God does not approve, it brings separation from God, heartache, and hurt. These women enticed the men they were having sex with to worship the false god Baal of Peor. God was not pleased! He told Moses to impale those leading this rebellion in order to turn away his anger. Moses told the tribal leaders to kill their followers who had yoked themselves to Baal of Peor. At that point the son of a leader took a Midianite woman into his tent for sex. Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, was incensed by such defiance and took a spear and drove it through the two sinners' abdomens as they lay together. God said that Phinehas had atoned for the people by his action. It is a dangerous thing to show contempt for God and his commands. The one who created all life has the right to call anyone into judgment at any time. God sent a plague among those who had rejected him, and twenty-four thousand died from it. Are we people who let our passions lead us to reject God and his will for us? If so, he will not be pleased with us either.

God is judge of all, and the book of Hebrews says that we will enter into judgment after we die. But we should not take the judgment of others on ourselves. James writes that there is only One Lawgiver and Judge. Jesus told his followers that we should love our enemies. He said we should not judge or condemn others lest we ourselves would be judged or condemned. We will be measured by the standard we set for others. How easy it seems these days to hear someone uttering a word of damnation against someone else! God alone has that right. Do we put ourselves in the place of God? Jesus taught that we should not be worried about removing a speck from someone else's eye while we have a log in our own. We need to learn to examine our own lives if we truly want to follow God's will. Are we people who examine ourselves?

March 2

After blessing Israel instead of cursing them as King Balak had hired him to do, Balaam returned to his home in the north without receiving any payment. But he apparently still wanted the money. Both Peter in his second letter and Jude say that he was influenced to unrighteousness for the reward payment. The book of Revelation says that he taught Balak how to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel by getting them to eat food offered to idols and practice sexual immorality. The Moabite and Midianite women had led the Israelite men astray with offers of sex and brought a plague on the people. So God told Moses to make war with Midian. When they killed the Midianites, Balaam was also there and was killed. So ended his quest for money. Do we let our desires to be rich get in the way of our serving God and only him? It will not end well for us either if we do.

John the Baptizer had been a very popular preacher. But after he stood up to Herod regarding incest, he was now in prison. He was supposed to be the forerunner of the Messiah, but this didn't seem like the fate that he had imagined the forerunner would experience. He sent some of his disciples to Jesus to ask if Jesus were indeed the one to come or should they look for another. Sometimes when things don't turn out like we thought they would, it is easy to have doubts creep in. Jesus told them to tell John the things he was doing. He was doing the signs that the prophet Isaiah had said the Messiah would do. It would have been easy to have answered yes, but Jesus sent back the proof that he was the Messiah. Do we believe everything we hear, or do we look for the proof? There are a lot of false teachings in the world.

The Pharisees were convinced that they were good. Therefore they had not been baptized by John for the forgiveness of their sins. When Jesus went to eat with a Pharisee, the man thought that Jesus could not be a prophet because a woman who was a known sinner was touching him, washing his feet. Are we people who believe in our own righteousness and find fault with others? Jesus is the only way to righteousness.

March 3

The people in the tribes of Gad and Reuben had a lot of livestock. They noticed that the land of the Amorites that they had conquered was good for grazing livestock. They told Moses that instead of inheriting land in Canaan on the other side of the Jordan River, they would like their inheritance to be on the east side with the good grazing land. Moses was incensed at their suggestion. He said that they were trying to discourage the rest of the people from conquering the land. The ten spies who brought back the bad report about Canaan had discouraged the people and God had made them wander in the wilderness for forty years. Are we people who discourage others from doing God's will? Should we not be those who encourage them instead? The men from Gad and Reuben said that they had a plan. They would build walled cities to protect their women and children and pens for their livestock, but the men would go over the river first to help the other tribes to win their own inheritance. Moses agreed to this plan, but only if they were certain to follow through with their promise to cross the river with the rest of the army. Do we make plans that are pleasing to God? Do those plans include helping others?

Luke also records the parable of the sower. A man sowed seed and it fell on the path, on rocky ground, on weedy ground, and on good soil. Jesus explained that the word of God is like seed in people's hearts. Some people let the devil take the word away, and they fail to believe and be saved. Others receive the word with joy, but it doesn't take root in their lives and they fall away in a time of testing. Still others have cares and riches and pleasures in their lives that choke out God's word so that they never bear fruit. But some people have honest and good hearts that allow the word to bear fruit with endurance. Which kind of people are we? Do we forget, fall away, let the word be choked, or bear fruit?

When people told Jesus that his mother and brothers were seeking him, he said that his real mother and brothers were those who hear God's word and do it! Are we true brothers and sisters of Jesus who do it?

March 4

God told Moses that when the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, they were to destroy all the figured stones, all the cast images, and all the high places where pagan worship took place. These things would have presented temptations to worship other gods, so they were not to be kept. Jesus teaches us to pray, "Do not lead us into temptation." Do we get rid of the things that may lead us into various temptations? Or do we keep them, thinking we can resist temptation?

When Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee, he came to the region of the Gerasenes on the east shore. There he found a man possessed by a demon. The man was not in his right mind and lived without clothes in tombs. He must have smelled like decaying flesh, but Jesus still cared about him. He commanded the demons to leave the man, but they asked if they could go into a herd of pigs. Jesus allowed this, but the pigs were so startled that they ran down the steep bank into the sea and drowned. When the people of the region heard about this, they came to see Jesus. They had just lost the value of two thousand pigs, and the fact that the man now wore clothes and was in his right mind did not matter to them. They asked Jesus to leave and he did. Do things matter more to us than people, especially dirty people? Would we rather that Jesus left and didn't bother us? The man now in his right mind wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus said he should go to his home and tell people what God had done for him. Are we people who tell others what God has done for us?

While Jesus was on his way to heal the twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus, a synagogue leader, a woman with a flow of blood approached him. Now Jesus wore the tassels on the corners of his cloak as the law said to do. She thought if she could just touch a tassel she would be healed. When she did so, she immediately felt the flow of blood stop. But Jesus realized that power had gone out of him and asked who had touched him. She confessed before the people how she had been healed. Are we people who tell others what Jesus has done for us? Or do we think that our religion is a private matter not to be shared?

March 5

The intent of the heart was important in the Law of Moses. The book of Leviticus says that if one sins unwittingly, that is, without realizing it, they could sacrifice a sin offering and be forgiven. However, if one should sin deliberately (the Hebrew expression is "with a high hand"), there was to be no forgiveness of sin. The book of Numbers says that if a person kills someone on purpose or with hatred in the heart, that person was guilty of murder and was to be put to death. On the other hand, if a person kills someone else accidentally, it was still important, but the punishment was to be exiled to the nearest of the six cities of refuge for the duration of the life of the high priest. We all sin, but the question is, What is the intent of our hearts?

The feeding of the five thousand is one of the few accounts that is found in all four of the Gospels. Jesus cares about people and in his teaching he makes sure they do not go home fainting from hunger. In the Sermon on the Mount he says not to worry about what we will eat and drink. God will provide, sometimes from our Christian brothers and sisters, but the apostle Paul makes a point that one is not to freeload off of fellow believers. Do we trust that God will provide for us, or do we worry?

When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, that is, the Messiah, Jesus told the apostles not to tell anyone. There was a great deal of speculation about the Messiah at that time, and people would have misunderstood what that confession meant. Even the apostles probably misunderstood. When we talk about Jesus, do we try to use language that cannot be misunderstood, or do we leave the wrong impression?

Jesus said that if people want to come after him, they must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow him. Salvation in Jesus is more than a beginning; it is a day after day for the rest of one's life process. How often do we think, "Well, I have been baptized" (or, said this prayer), so I am okay with God? The start is important; dying with Jesus in baptism is important, but it is just a start. Follow daily!

March 6

Before he died, Moses gathered the people of Israel on the plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho and spoke to them. He began by recounting the events since the people had left Mt. Sinai (also called Mt. Horeb). He paid special attention to the fact that their fathers had rebelled against God's command to attack the land thirty-nine years ago and thus the people had been wandering in the wilderness until all those warriors who were afraid were dead. It is sometimes said that those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it. Moses did not want the Israelites to repeat the mistakes of their ancestors. What about us? Do we learn from the mistakes that our parents made? Or do we hold on to their ways even if they are not what God commands?

While people were amazed at Jesus' miracles, he told his disciples that he was going to be betrayed. They didn't understand what Jesus was talking about and were afraid to ask, but they did argue among themselves as to which of them were the greatest. Do we sometimes focus on our own worth rather than on what Jesus does for us? Jesus took a child and told them that the least among them was the greatest. For some reason, this prompted John to tell Jesus that they tried to stop someone from casting out demons in Jesus' name because he was not a part of their group. Jesus replied that if a person is not against you he is for you. That is true at least in some sense. We would like everyone to be with us, but there are people who are not with us and yet are not opposed to us either. Are we like John, ready to find fault with those who are not with us? As they traveled to Jerusalem, some Samaritans did not welcome Jesus. John and his brother James wanted to call down fire from heaven on them. Jesus rebuked them for their violent reaction. On the other hand, when someone wanted to follow Jesus without realizing what he would be giving up, Jesus told him the true cost. And for those who wanted to follow him but do it later, he said that one could not begin to plow and then look back. Are we people who have some excuse about other things we need to do instead of really following Jesus? He wants us to follow him now.

March 7

As Moses talked to the people of Israel before he died, he reminded them of how God had helped them defeat the two Amorite kings Sihon and Og. He told them that when they crossed over the Jordan River into Canaan, the Lord would help them defeat the kings there in the same way. Do we look to what God has done for us in the past to have the faith that he will help us in the future? He also told the people that God had helped the Ammonites descended from Lot to defeat the tall people known as the Rephaim or Zamzummim. They were as tall as the Anakim in Canaan of whom their fathers had been afraid. Therefore, they should not be afraid of the tall people when they cross the river into Canaan. Do we let our imagination make us afraid instead of trusting God? Those who had been afraid died in the wilderness.

Moses told the people that he was teaching them the statutes and ordinances which God wanted them to obey. He said they must not add anything to what he was commanding them nor take anything away from them. Rather, they should keep the commandments of the LORD their God. By Jesus' time the rabbis had added many traditional teachings to the Law of Moses. Jesus was often in conflict with the Pharisees because he did not keep the additional traditions. He said that their worship was vain when they taught human doctrines in place of God's commands. Are we guilty of adding to God's commands with our own traditions? Or do we let some of his commands go unobeyed, saying they don't relate to the modern age?

When Jesus was asked by a scribe what he must do to inherit eternal life, he asked the scribe to say what he thought. The scribe said to love God and love one's neighbor. When Jesus said that is right, the scribe asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responded by telling the Parable of the Good Samaritan. A man injured by robbers was ignored by a priest and a Levite, but he was helped by a Samaritan who happened to come by. Jesus told the scribe to do what the Samaritan had done. Do we help those whom we see need help, or do we pass by on the other side?

March 8

When Moses spoke to the people of Israel gathered on the east side of the Jordan River, he told them to tell their children and grandchildren about their experience with God at Mt. Sinai. The goal of doing this was so that they would learn to fear the Lord. Do we share our spiritual experience with our children and grandchildren? Life will be so much better for them if they learn the fear of the Lord.

Moses told the people that when they heard God speaking the Ten Commandments from the mountain, they saw no form or image. Therefore, they were not to make any idol or image of any kind of creature on land or sea or in the air to worship. They were also not to worship the sun, moon, or stars, for God created them for the benefit of all the people of the world. Are we tempted to make religious images to help us focus on God? He would not be pleased. Jesus says that God is a spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. Do we offer true spiritual worship to God?

Moses told the people to keep the statutes and commandments that God had given them. They were given for the people's well-being and for the well-being of their descendants. If they did the commandments, they would live long in the land. Then he repeated the Ten Commandments that God had spoken from the mountain. He reminded them that they had been afraid of the voice of God at that time. The fear of God was given to them so that they would obey God. Do we have the kind of fear of God that leads us to obey him?

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, first blessing God as regards his holy name and his kingdom. Only then should they request a blessing for their food and forgiveness. When they ask for forgiveness, they should tell God that they forgive those indebted to them. How often do we add that last part about forgiving others when we pray? Are we only interested in receiving forgiveness and not giving it ourselves? Do we think that God will keep us from trials if we are not forgiving?

March 9

Moses told the people of Israel, "You must be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn to the right or to the left. You must follow exactly the path that the LORD your God has commanded you." Jesus said that the path to heaven is straight but hard. Do we stay on the path that God has commanded us to walk on? Or do we sometimes stray, taking our own way, and find ourselves in a ditch?

Moses gave the people what Jesus called the first and great commandment: "Hear, O Israel. The LORD is our God, the LORD alone [or, one LORD]. You shall love LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Moses said they were to teach these words to their children and talk about them in their home and on the road. They were to be signs on their hands, their foreheads, their doorposts, and their gates. The Jews of Jesus' time took this command literally and put little scripture scrolls in boxes called phylacteries (on their hands and forehead) and mezuzahs (on doorposts). One might imagine that God is not so interested in having the message hidden on scrolls in boxes as in having it written in the open and on the hearts of those who love him. Do we love God with our all? Do we share that message with others? Do we see him as the one God, the only God?

Moses said the Israelites were not to intermarry with the pagan people of the land because those pagans would turn his people away from following God. The apostle Paul wrote something similar when he told the Corinthians to quit becoming yoked together with unbelievers. How is it that when good people are yoked with bad people, the bad seems often to prevail? Do we encourage our children to marry Christians?

Moses told the people that God was giving them a good land. They must be careful lest they become wealthy and think that they have made the riches by themselves and forget the blessings that God has given them. Do we realize that our blessings all come from God? Do we thank him for the wealth that we have? Do we worship him, not riches?

March 10

Moses summarized what God requires of people: "Only to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being." The fear of God leads to a life walk, to love and serve God and keep his commandments. It is for our own good. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Being able to keep the commandments grows out of our love for God. It shows what true love for God is. Are we people who truly love God? Do we want to keep his commandments?

Moses encouraged the people to circumcise the foreskin of their hearts and no longer be stubborn. That foreskin is a callousness toward God that grows out of wanting to do our own stubborn will. Will we yield our will to God's? Jesus teaches us to pray, "May your will be done," and in the garden he prayed, "Not my will, but yours." Is this our prayer too? Are we willing to circumcise that heart's stubborn foreskin?

Moses said that God is not partial and cannot be bribed. He executes justice for orphans and widows and loves strangers. Moses told the Israelites that they too were to love strangers, for they were strangers in the land of Egypt. Can we empathize with those who are different from us? Can we follow the example of God in how we treat people?

Jesus said that we should be on our guard against all kinds of greed because a person's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions. To illustrate his point, he told a parable of a rich man who hoarded his grain crop, thus driving up the cost for the poor. He thought he had plenty for the rest of his life, but his life came to an abrupt end. Jesus said it will be this way for those who store up treasures for themselves and are not rich toward God. Are we generous with the world's goods that God has blessed us with? Or do we become miserly and stingy, not using them for God's purpose?

March 11

God told Moses that if the people wanted to eat meat, they could. They didn't have to go to the tabernacle and sacrifice an animal; they could kill it at home. He did restrict what kind of meat that Israelites could eat: it had to be from mammals that both chewed the cud and split the hoof (like cattle, sheep, goats, and deer), or from birds that were not meat eaters, or from fish that had both fins and scales. That restriction was an Old Testament thing; in the New Testament we find that any animal can be eaten. But God said not to eat the blood; rather, pour it out on the ground. He said the life is in the blood. That is true in a physical sense. It is also true in a spiritual sense. We have spiritual life because Jesus shed his blood on the cross for our sins. Do we appreciate the cleansing power of his blood for our lives?

God told the Israelites not to look at the people around them to find ways to worship him. He hated many of the ways of worship they had, including child sacrifice. Rather, he said they should observe his commandments and not take away or add anything to them. Do we look to God's word to find out how he wants to be worshiped? Or do we make up our own ways of worshiping him?

God said that there might be prophets who would appear in the future and the prophecies they give might come true. But if those prophets should say to worship other gods, they were not from God but were a test to see if the people would be true to God's word. This was the first test for false prophets in the book of Deuteronomy. Prophets who have false teaching are to be rejected. There are some who would claim to be modern-day prophets. Do we test what they say against God's word?

God said that the people should set apart a tithe (that is, a tenth of their income) in his honor. Some of that tithe should go to supporting the Levites, the widows, the orphans, and the foreigners who lived among them. Do we honor God by setting apart some of our income to help others around us? Is it as much as a tenth of what we make?

March 12

God told the Israelites that every seventh year was to be a time of remission of debts. Debts owed by Israelites to other Israelites were to be forgiven. Israelite slaves were to be freed. This is similar to what Jesus taught. He said that his followers were to lend, expecting nothing in return. He taught that one should pray, "Forgive us of our debts as we forgive those indebted to us." Jesus paid our debts on the cross. He blotted out that IOU that said we owed the Father and nailed it to the cross. Obeying what Jesus says will be very hard if we are devoted to money. We should be devoted to God. Do we forgive others? Do we thank God for his forgiveness in Jesus?

There were three times a year that every Israelite man was supposed to appear at the festival ceremonies: the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Booths. God said that no one should appear before him empty handed. Whether one had little or much, he was to bring an offering to God. Do we bring offerings to God? He is a great king, and his greatness is shown by the offerings his subjects bring. Do we consider him our great King?

God said to appoint judges who would render just decisions, not distort justice, not show partiality, and not accept a bribe. He said to pursue justice, and only justice. Are we the sort of people who are interested in justice? There is a lot of injustice in our world. Are we concerned about it? What do we do about it?

Jesus said that we should show humility. If we are invited to a feast, we should take the least important seat. If we are worthy of honor, the host will move us up. Some people shout their own greatness. That is not the way with Christians. Are we humble as we should be?

Jesus told a parable about a great dinner. When people were invited, they began to make excuses. Are we people that make excuses about serving God? He has invited us to the great Messianic banquet.

March 13

God told the Israelites that if they wanted a king, they could have one of his choosing. The king would have to be an Israelite, one who would not acquire the wealth of horses, gold, and silver. He should write on a scroll a copy of God's law and keep it by himself. He should read in it all the days of his life, so that he would learn to fear God. He should not exalt himself above the people, nor turn either to the right or the left from keeping the commandments of God. In some sense we should be like such a king, for the New Testament says that we shall reign with Christ. Do we read in God's word every day? Does it help us to fear God and keep his commandments?

God told Moses that he would raise up a prophet like him and the people should listen to that prophet. God would put his words in the mouth of the prophet, and he would tell them everything that God commands. God would hold accountable anyone who did not pay attention to this prophet. Stephen in the book of Acts says that the prophet like Moses, a lawgiver, is Jesus. Do we pay attention to what Jesus says and follow his commands? There would also be other prophets that would arise. Some of them would be false prophets who make up their own message and say it is from God. God said that if the message did not come true then the message was not from him. This is the second test in the book of Deuteronomy for a false prophet. Do we test those who claim to speak for God to see if what they are saying is true?

Jesus said that if a person wants to follow him, that person needs to count the cost of doing so. Such a person cannot put any family member above Jesus in importance. He or she must carry the cross and follow Jesus. If a person wants to be a disciple of Jesus, he or she must say goodbye to possessions. All that we possess actually belongs to God, not to us. If we fail to count the cost of being a disciple, we may well fail in following Jesus. Are we willing to give up family and possessions to follow Jesus? Do we consider that the things that we have actually belong to God and he is letting us use them for his glory?

March 14

God told the Israelites that when they go out to battle and face an enemy with more chariots, horses, and soldiers than they had, they should not be afraid because he was with them. Before the battle the priests would remind them that God was with them. The officers would tell the men that if anyone had built a house and not dedicated it, or planted a vineyard and not eaten the fruit, or betrothed a wife and not taken her in marriage, that person should leave lest he die in battle. They also said that anyone who was afraid should leave lest he affect other soldiers in the battle. The fact that God was with them to win the battle did not mean that no man would die in the fighting. So it is in life. Sometimes we think that if God is with us, nothing bad can happen to us. That simply is not true. There are times of testing that come to all of us. That testing does not mean that God is not with us. But he will help us through it. Do we trust God even when it seems that everything around us is going wrong? He is there even when we don't see him.

God told the Israelites that an executed man who is hung on a tree should be taken down and buried before nightfall because a person hung on a tree is under a curse. The Jewish leaders told the Christians that they worshiped a man who was under a curse. In the book of Galatians Paul says that Jesus was under a curse because he took on a curse for us. We were under a curse because we do not do all that God commands us to do. But Jesus became a curse for us. That is why the early Christians referred to the cross as a tree. Do we appreciate the fact that Jesus took our curse on himself when he died on that cross made out of a tree?

Jesus told the Parable of the Crooked Manager who had been misusing the owner's goods for selfish purposes and was to be fired. In response, he discounted what the debtors owed so they would take care of him when he lost his job. The point of that parable is that each of us is the crooked manager who will have to give an account after death of how we have used or misused the things that God has given us. Do we use them to help other people or do we spend them on ourselves?

March 15

The Law of Moses said that a person who goes through a vineyard may eat some grapes off of the vine, but he or she must not put any in a container. Only the owner has that right. In the same way, a person walking by a grainfield may take a handful of grain to eat, but he or she must not harvest any with a sickle. When Jesus and his disciples were walking by a grainfield, the disciples helped themselves to heads of grain. The Pharisees accused them of working on the Sabbath, threshing the grain in their hands. They had made an extreme definition of work so as to negate what the law said about eating a handful of grain. Do we sometimes make up rules that negate what God has commanded?

The Law of Moses also said that if a poor person gave his or her cloak as collateral for a loan, the lender must return the cloak at night time so that the person could be wrapped in it against the cold. Lenders had gotten around this by asking for the robe or tunic (the main article of clothing) instead. Jesus said that if someone wants your robe as collateral, give that person your cloak as well. They were keeping the letter of the law, but breaking its spirit. Are we people who are so interested in the letter of God's law that we find ways to get around it ("Well, it doesn't say not to")?

The Law of Moses said that when the crops first begin to ripen, the owner should take some of the first of the harvest and go to the priest where God's dwelling place (tabernacle) was and offer these firstfruits to God. When we give to God, do we give to him first from our income? Or does he get some of what is left over as we spend on other things?

Ten lepers asked Jesus to heal them and he told them to go to the priests to offer thanksgiving to God. On the way they were healed. Only one of them, a Samaritan, turned back to thank Jesus. Jesus said, "Were not ten healed? Where are the nine?" When we ask God for something, are we thankful when he answers our prayers? Do we thank him for this? Do we share with others that thankfulness?

March 16

Moses told the Israelite people that when they crossed over the Jordan River, they were to gather on the twin mountains Gerizim and Ebal, six tribes on each mountain. The Levites were to read the curses and the people were to respond, "Amen." Curses were to be spoken against practicing idolatry, dishonoring parents, moving boundary markers, misleading a blind person, depriving foreigners, orphans, and widows of justice, practicing incest with a father's wife, a sister, or a mother-in-law, practicing bestiality, killing a neighbor, and taking a bribe to kill someone. The last curse was "Cursed be anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by observing them." In the book of Galatians the apostle Paul says that all of us were under this curse, but Jesus took on a curse for us ("Cursed be anyone who hangs on a tree") in place of this curse. Do we thank Jesus for being cursed in our place by dying on the cross? He didn't deserve that curse; we did.

Jesus told a parable about a widow and an unjust judge. She kept going to the judge for justice, but for a long time he refused. Finally, he said that he was going to give her justice lest she finally come and give him a black eye. The lesson of the parable is that if an unjust judge will give justice to a person who is persistent, how much more will a just God give justice to his people who cry out to him day and night. Are we people who persist in our prayers to God? Or do we give up, saying, "I asked, but he didn't answer"?

Jesus also told a parable about a Pharisee and tax collector who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee told God about all the good things that he had done and how righteous he was. The tax collector prayed that God would turn his anger away from him (literally, be propitious), a sinner. Jesus said that God heard the prayer of the tax collector rather than that of the Pharisee. God wants us to be good and do good. But do we rely on our good works to get God to answer our prayers? God answers our prayers based on what Jesus has done for us. Do we ask God for forgiveness because of Jesus, asking in his name?

March 17

The pagans of the ancient world had good gods and bad gods, gods that they believed would bless them and gods that they believed would bring evil on them. But there is only one God. He told the Israelites that he would bring them blessings if they obeyed him. He also said that he would bring destruction on them if they disobeyed. Consider what happened to the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Israelites received the blessing of freedom from slavery. The Egyptians received punishment for not letting them leave the land. Sometimes we like to think of God as being a loving God who only brings good to people. But he is also a God to be feared if we disobey him. Do we believe in a watered-down God who is only love and never fear?

The Israelites that God brought out of the land of Egypt saw the wonders that God worked there. But when Moses addressed the people at the end of his life, he said that God had not given them a mind to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. The same thing happened when Jesus appeared later on. He told parables that people did not understand. He quoted Isaiah to say that they listened but didn't understand, they saw but didn't perceive. They had shut their eyes and ears to the truth. Are we people who truly listen and truly see what God wants us to hear and see? Or are our minds closed to his truths?

God told the Israelites that the word of his commandment was not too hard and not far away. They did not have to go up to heaven or cross the sea to get it. The word was near, both in their mouths and in their hearts so that they could obey it. The apostle Paul used the same figure of speech to refer to Jesus. We do not have to ascend to heaven to bring down the Messiah. God has done that. We do not have to descend to the lower depths of the earth to bring him back to life. God has done that. The difficult work has been done. Our calling is to believe in what God has done and obey him. Do we believe that Jesus came from God in heaven? Do we believe that God raised him back to life? Does that make us want to obey him? It should.

March 18

When Moses was a hundred and twenty years old and he realized that he was not going to cross the Jordan River into Canaan, God told him to confirm Joshua as the new leader in front of the people. Joshua had been Moses' assistant for the forty years in the wilderness and had been trained by Moses. Good leaders train people to do their job when they can no longer do it. In fact, it is not just the leaders of people, but everyone who has a ministry should train others also to do their ministry. Are we people who train others to do God's work? Or do we try to do all the work ourselves, afraid that someone will take away our job?

On the Sunday before Jesus was crucified, he had two of his disciples go into a nearby village and bring him a young donkey to ride on. As he came down the Mount of Olives toward the city of Jerusalem, people spread their cloaks on the road like rolling out a red carpet. A large crowd loudly praised God for all the wonders they had seen Jesus perform. They shouted, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" Do we honor Jesus as the King of our lives? The King gets to tell us what to do. Are we willing to listen to him?

As Jesus neared the city of Jerusalem, he started crying because he knew about the evil that was going to happen to the city when the people in it rejected him. That happened forty years later when the Romans destroyed the city. Jesus cared about even those who would not believe in him. He cares about us today. Do we care about the people that Jesus cares about? He calls us to be like him.

When Jesus entered the temple, he began driving out those who had turned the outer courtyard into a marketplace. He said they had turned the place of prayer into a den of robbers. He called them robbers because of the high prices they were charging. He stayed in the temple every day that week teaching the people. Some people see religion not a means to teach people about God, but as a way to make money. Are we, like Jesus, interested in teaching others about what God wants us to do?

March 19

God told Moses that he knew that many of the Israelites were going to follow after false gods after Moses was gone. He gave Moses a song about this to teach the Israelites. The song begins with how great God is. Then it talks about how the people are going to abandon him for idols. When they do, they will be worshipping demons. God is a jealous God and will be very displeased. Those who turn from him he will bring destruction upon. In the song God says, "there is no god besides me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and no one can deliver from my hand." It ends with praise for God. Even though God knew that many of the people would desert him, he still chose them. But those who chose to worship other gods would be punished. God has chosen us in Jesus Christ. Are we the sort of people who stay true to him? Or are we the kind of people who choose to fall away? He knows, but it is our choice.

God told Moses to ascend Mount Nebo in the Abarim range and view the land of Canaan across the Jordan River. He would die and not be allowed to cross the Jordan into Canaan himself. This was because he had failed to maintain God's holiness among the people but had taken the credit himself for providing the water from the rock at Meribath-Kadesh. Ironically, the word Kadesh is the Hebrew word for holy. Do we give God the credit for the good things that happen in our lives? Do we try to keep his name holy by the way that we live and talk? God would not relent and allow Moses to cross into Canaan. Sometimes there are consequences to sin that cannot be undone.

The Sadducees were a kind of secularists of the ancient world. They did not believe in spirits or angels or life after death. It was all about this world, not the next. They tried to trip up Jesus with an outrageous story about a woman who married seven brothers, one after another, and wanted to know whose wife she would be in the next world. Jesus said there was no marriage in the next world and people who rise from the dead would never die. Do we believe him? Or are we secularists too?

March 20

The addendum to Deuteronomy (chapter 34) tells of the death of Moses. When he was one hundred twenty years old he climbed Mount Nebo to the Pisgah peak across the Jordan River from Jericho. From that mountaintop God showed him the land of Canaan. He died there on Mount Nebo, but God buried him in a valley in Moab where no human would know the location of his grave. Moses was a great prophet, but his gravesite was not to be venerated. At the time that Deuteronomy was finished, no prophet like Moses had arisen in Israel, a prophet that God spoke to “face to face.” The New Testament says that Jesus is the prophet like Moses; he is the new lawgiver. The book of Hebrews says that Moses was faithful as a servant, but Jesus was faithful as a Son. He was even greater. We do know where Jesus was buried. It was marked for all time when the Romans tried to destroy it by building a temple to Aphrodite over it. But it is empty because Jesus rose from the dead, something Moses could not do. At the transfiguration a voice came from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” Do we look to Jesus as our example and teacher? Truly he is the greater prophet and much more than a prophet. None other is like him.

After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua and told him it was time to lead the Israelite people across the Jordan River. God told him that he would be with him just as he was with Moses. He said, “I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous.” Do we realize that our real strength comes from the fact that God is with us? God told Joshua that he was to read the book of the law and meditate on it day and night. It seems like sometimes we are so busy in our daily lives that we don’t take the time to meditate on God’s word. Do you set aside time in your daily activities to both read and meditate on God’s word?

Jesus told his disciples that they would be persecuted and hated. Some would be put in prison and some even would be put to death. But he said, “By your endurance you will gain your souls.” Do we endure in faith when people speak against us because we follow Jesus?

March 21

Joshua sent two men to Jericho to spy out the city. They stopped at the house of Rahab, a prostitute. When the king of Jericho heard of them, he sent word to Rahab to turn them over. But she had hidden them on the roof under flax stalks that were spread out there. She told the men that the people of Jericho had heard of the Red Sea drying up for them to cross over and of how they had defeated the two Amorite kings Sihon and Og. Because of this she said that the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below. When people tell about God's great works, it produces faith in some who hear; in others it just produces fear. Do we spread the word about how God is working in the world? Rahab's house was located on top of the outer city wall. She let the men down through a window on a crimson rope after getting them to agree to spare everyone in her house when the Israelites attacked. She was not just interested in saving her own life, but also the lives of her family as well. Do we care about the lives of those close to us like Rahab did?

God told Joshua that he would exalt him in the eyes of the Israelites by drying up the Jordan River just as he did with the Red Sea. That way they would know that the living God was among them. It is important not just that unbelievers hear about God's works, but believers as well. It is too easy to forget what God has done for us in the past. Joshua had the priests carry the Ark of the Covenant into the Jordan River. When they stepped into the river, the water stopped flowing upstream and the water where they were flowed on, exposing the river bed. The people crossed over the Jordan even though it was in the spring flood season. Joshua had men set up two piles of twelve stones each to commemorate the crossing, one in the river where the priests stood and one at Gilgal on the west bank of the river. Do we establish ways to commemorate what God has done in our lives? The Lord's Supper is one way that we can commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus. Do we remember him when we take that supper? The stones were to be used to tell their children what God had done. Do we tell our children about the mighty works of God?

March 22

God told Joshua to have the warriors march around the city of Jericho every day for six days with the Levites carrying the Ark of the Covenant and seven priests blowing ram's horns before it. On the seventh day they were to do this seven times. At the end of the march, they were to blow on the horns and shout, and God would make the walls fall down. The people were to devote the city to destruction, which means that all the people except Rahab's family and all the animals were to be killed. In addition, the city was to be burned with all its contents and only the metals gold, silver, bronze, and iron were to be saved for the Lord's treasury. The people were not to take any spoils for themselves. So the people did as God said, and he made the walls fall down. The two spies rescued Rahab and her family. And the city was devoted to destruction. The Greek word for devoted to destruction is anathema, a very strong curse. Paul uses this word in Galatians for those who would teach a different gospel. It is a dangerous thing to change God's teaching. Are we people who hold to the gospel teaching the way it is in scripture? Or do we change it up to our liking? Will we be devoted to destruction?

When the Israelites tried to attack the next city Ai, they were chased away. God told Joshua it was because someone kept the devoted things. He said that they had stolen from him in doing so. Are we people who keep for ourselves the things that should go to God? Would God say we are stealing from him? The Israelites cast lots and determined that a man named Achan had kept items for himself: a beautiful cloak from Babylon, two hundred shekels of silver, and a fifty-shekel gold bar. He had hidden them in the ground under his tent. There is an irony in this. He had to have them, but he had to hide them, making them unusable, in order to keep them. Isn't that the way that sin works? It promises good but doesn't deliver. Achan and his whole family, who had known about hiding the crime, were stoned to death, and all his goods were burned to complete the devotion to destruction. The punishment may seem severe, but God means what he says. Are we people who think that God will never call us into judgment for disobeying his word?

March 23

After the stoning of Achan and his family, the Israelites were able to capture and destroy the city of Ai. This led to two responses on the part of the Canaanites in the land: fear and faith. While most of the Canaanites experienced fear, they decided to fight against the Israelites. The Hivite people, however, believed that God was with the Israelites and decided it would be better to be their servants than to be destroyed. They set about to deceive the people so they would not be destroyed. They took old clothes and old food and came to the Israelites, claiming that they had come from a distant land to make a treaty with the people of Israel. As proof, they showed them their old things and said that these were fresh and new when they started. The leaders of the Israelites did not consult God but took what the Hivites said at face value. They swore an oath with them that they would not destroy them. Three days later they found out that the Hivites were near neighbors. Are we people who trust in our own ability to tell what is true and what is not? Do we measure truth by God's word or by what people around us are saying? When other Canaanite kings attacked the Hivite cities, Joshua led the army against them and defeated them, killing their kings. The Israelites kept true to their oath even though they were deceived when they made it. Are we people who keep our word even if it no longer seems best?

After Pilate examined Jesus, he wanted to release him. The crowd outside, however, yelled to crucify Jesus. Pilate was swayed by the crowd rather than what his interrogation of Jesus had shown. Are we swayed by the people around us as to how to act? Or do we examine God's word to find out how he wants us to act?

Jesus was all about forgiveness on the cross. Not only are we forgiven by his death, he prayed for God to forgive those who crucified him. Mark says that those who were crucified with him taunted him, but Luke says that one of them changed and, rebuking the other, asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus said that he would be in paradise with him that day, forgiving the repentant taunter.

March 24

The Canaanites had become so wicked that God had determined to destroy them. With the exception of the Hivites from Gibeon, who became the servants of the Israelites, the Canaanite kings decided to fight against Joshua and the people of Israel. God had hardened their hearts (that is, made them stubborn) because of their continual sin. The Israelites destroyed thirty-one kings in the land of Canaan. Do we realize that continued sin in our lives can lead to a hard heart? Do we suppose that God will not destroy us if we live in continual wickedness?

People sometimes say they want to be saved like the thief on the cross. Actually that is the only way to be saved, but they rarely realize what they are saying. It was not a simple request of Jesus. That thief had first of all to change his mind about taunting Jesus. His repentance is shown by his rebuke of the other thief. He showed extraordinary faith when he asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. He believed that somehow Jesus would have a future kingdom, that death would not be the end. One might wonder if he was thinking of the resurrection. And then he died with Jesus. That is the answer to how to be saved. The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans that when they were baptized, they were baptized into Jesus' death. They died with him. And dead people no longer practice sin. Do you look back on your baptism as a death to self and sin? That is the true meaning of baptism: dying with Jesus and rising to live a new kind of life, his kind.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to two of his disciples as they traveled from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. Luke says that their eyes were kept from recognizing him. On the road he explained to them from the scriptures that the Messiah had to die and rise to life again. They urged him to stay with them, and at supper they recognized him when he blessed the bread. He disappeared, but they said that their hearts had burned within them when he opened the scriptures to them. Do our hearts burn within us when we read God's scriptures? They point to Jesus as the one who had to die and rise again.

March 25

Caleb was one of the two spies sent by Moses into Canaan who said that God would help them take the land. God had promised him that he would inherit the land where he had walked. Forty-five years later he asked the other faithful spy Joshua for the city of Hebron to inherit. He said that God had been faithful in keeping his promise to him of long life. Do we trust that God will be faithful in his promise of our salvation? Do we look forward to our resurrection in the new world?

When Jesus appeared to the eleven apostles and their companions in a locked room, they were startled and scared. They thought that he was a ghost. He told them to look at his hands and his feet. Ghosts do not have flesh and bones like he had. Their response on seeing his hands and feet was one of a mixture of joy, disbelief, and wonder. He asked if they had anything to eat. They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he ate it in their presence. He reminded them that he had told them that everything written in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms (the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible) had to be fulfilled. Do we believe that God will fulfill what the scriptures say about our own resurrection in the future? Or do we see ourselves as disembodied spirits (that is, ghosts) for eternity? God has promised great things for us. The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead, and that we also will rise when he comes again. The scriptures teach it; do we believe it?

Jesus told his disciples that the scriptures foretold that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. They further said that repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached in his name to all nations. Sometimes we focus on the forgiveness of sins to the exclusion of repentance. But the God who forgives sins expects us to change our way of thinking as a result. That message is to go out to all nations. Do we try to spread it throughout the world? Or do we think it is only for those who look and talk and act like us? Maybe we just give lip service to worldwide missions. Will God be pleased with that?

March 26

As Joshua began to divide the conquered land of Canaan among the nine and a half tribes that didn't get land on the east side of the Jordan River, Judah received a good number of cities which are listed in the book of Joshua. Among them we find listed Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza; however, these were Philistine cities, and Judah failed to conquer them. In the same way, Gezer is listed as a city in Ephraim that was never conquered. And the half tribe of Manasseh never conquered several of its cities, including Megiddo. Has God given us blessings that we have failed to obtain? Is that because we do not trust him to help us obtain them?

The apostle John begins his gospel by stating that the Word was in the beginning, was with God, and was himself God. We often refer to Jesus as the Son of God, but the term Word of God is much stronger. How can one separate oneself from the word that exists in one's mind? As a person thinks, so is he or she. Although we can see the difference between the Son of God and the Father, it is hard to see the difference between God and his Word. It was that very Word that became a man of flesh in this world. John writes that he encamped or tented among us, showing that his sojourn here was temporary. But that temporary sojourn has changed this world. Do we realize that Jesus, the man in the flesh, was in fact the Word of God, the very essence of God? And yet he humbled himself to die on the cross for us. Are we truly thankful?

John writes that Jesus was full of grace and truth; from that fullness we have received grace on top of grace. The Old Testament law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. We are glad to receive grace from him because we know that we need it. Are we also glad to receive truth from him? That truth may cause us to change our lives. Do we truly want to change? Jesus wants us to do so.

John the Baptizer came into this world to testify that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Do we share that message with others? They too are caught up in sin and need to know about Jesus.

March 27

God told the Israelites to send men throughout the land of Canaan and divide the land not yet allotted to tribes into seven portions. Then they were to cast lots to assign each of the portions to one of the seven remaining tribes. The tribe of Simeon received a portion inside the southern part of Judah's territory because Judah had received a territory that was too big for it. So Judah had to share what it had received. Are we willing to share what we receive? When we have too much of something, do we hold on to it tightly? What about ministry? Do we claim a particular ministry as our own and resist anyone trying to join us in it? Would we ever train someone to do the same ministry with us?

When John saw Jesus walking by, he told two of his disciples, "Look, the Lamb of God!" They followed Jesus and stayed most of that day with him, from ten in the morning until sundown. One of the followers was Andrew. He found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. Jesus gave Simon the nickname Rock, which is Cephias (*Kephas*) in Aramaic and Peter (*Petros*) in Greek. Do we tell our relatives about Jesus? Jesus also called Philip to follow him. In turn, Philip went to Nathanael and told him that they had found the Christ, that is, the Messiah or Anointed One, who was Jesus of Nazareth. Nathanael said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered, "Come and see!" Do we invite people to come to Jesus and see what he is about? He is about their salvation. When Nathanael met Jesus, Jesus told him that he had seen him in his mind under a fig tree. Immediately Nathanael proclaimed that he was the Son of God and King of Israel because Jesus knew where he had been. Jesus said, "Do you believe because of what I told you ...? You will see greater things than this. You will see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man." He was referring to Jacob's dream of a ladder to heaven. Jesus is that ladder to heaven. Do you believe that he is the only way? After his resurrection the apostle Peter said that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Salvation in Jesus is not just a can, but a must. And so we must share that good news about Jesus.

March 28

After the Israelites had conquered most of the land of Canaan, Joshua sent the warriors from Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh to their home on the east side of the Jordan River. He told them to observe the commandments and instructions given by Moses, to love the LORD God and walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all their heart and with all their soul. Are we people who love God, who strive to walk in all his ways, who keep his commands and hold fast to him, and who serve him with all our heart and all our soul? These are things that God expects of us.

The Jewish leader Nicodemus came to visit Jesus. He said he knew Jesus had come from God because of the signs that he did. Jesus replied that one must be born from above to see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus misunderstood what kind of birth Jesus was talking about. Jesus clarified that one must be born of water and Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. He said that flesh gives birth to flesh, but he was talking about how Spirit gives birth to Spirit. The apostle Peter said that when one is baptized in water into Christ, they receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. One cannot serve God as a matter of flesh. The flesh tends to lead to sin. One needs God's Spirit to focus on serving God. That is why one needs to be born from above. Do we realize that?

The most famous verse in the gospel of John says that God loves us so much that he gave his Son so that we might have eternal life. Our part is to believe in that Son. That is not just an intellectual belief, but a trust placed in him. If we trust someone, we will do what that person says. Do we trust Jesus enough to do what he says?

When John the Baptizer was confronted with the fact that disciples were leaving him to follow Jesus, he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." He was not jealous; instead, he realized his purpose in life was to point people to Jesus. How about us? Do we realize that our purpose in life is to point people to Jesus?

March 29

When the warriors from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned to their homes on the east side of the Jordan River, they built a large altar at the Jordan as a sign that they followed the same worship of the LORD as those on the west side. Because it was an altar, however, the Israelites on the west side assumed that it was for sacrifices contrary to what the Law of Moses said to do. They talked about going to war with the tribes on the east, but first they sent a delegation to talk with them. The men from the two and a half tribes explained their purpose in building the altar and said it was not for sacrifices. This satisfied the delegation and the people in the west, and there was peace. How often do we hear of something and jump to conclusions based on our suppositions? Do we follow the example here and go to talk with people to find out the truth? Or do we spread stories about them?

Joshua called the people together and told them that they needed to decide what God they were going to worship: the LORD or some other god, either from their ancestors or the people of Canaan. He said that they need to choose that day who they would worship. We too need to make that choice. Sometimes we are half following God and half doing what the world around us does. God wants us to follow him completely. Are we willing to make that choice?

While Jesus was waiting by Jacob's well as his disciples went into the city of Sychar to buy food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus asked her for a drink, which surprised her since Jews did not get along well with Samaritans. Further, rabbis often did not speak to strange women, and Jesus knew about this woman's marriage problems. But she needed the living water that Jesus offered. Do we sometimes decide not to talk to people because they are the "wrong" kind? But they need Jesus too. And we do not know how God has been preparing them. The woman knew a Messiah was coming. Jesus told his disciples that they would be reaping where others had sown. Do we suppose that we are the first and only influence on people that we tell about Jesus?

March 30

The Israelite people served the LORD all the lifetime of Joshua and all the lifetime of the elders who outlived Joshua, the ones who had seen all the mighty works of God. However, in the third generation people began to turn away from worshiping God. The law had said that people were to tell their children about God and his works. Was it just because that third generation had not experienced God's works for themselves that they turned away? Or was it because their parents were so busy in taking the new land that they didn't take the time to teach their children about God? Do we take the time to tell our children about God so that he becomes real to them?

The book of Judges gives several accounts of how the people turned from following God and his ways. They seemed to turn to the worship of Ba'al and Astarte, the gods of the Canaanites. This provoked God to anger, and he brought invading armies against them. Finally, they would cry out to God in their oppression, and he would raise up a judge to deliver them. For a while they would turn to God, but they did not really listen to the judge, and when he died, they would once again turn back to the worship of false gods. Are we people who turn to God only when times are bad, but who ignore him if our life is going well?

The Samaritans listened to the woman at the well and then listened to Jesus, and they came to believe in him because of what they heard. Do we listen to Jesus so that we might believe in him? As he went on to Galilee, people welcomed him because they had seen all the signs he performed in Jerusalem. A certain official came to him from Capernaum because his son was deathly ill. He wanted Jesus to come with him to heal his son. Jesus said that the people would not believe unless they saw signs and wonders. But the official begged him to come before his boy died. Jesus told him to go home and his son would live. He believed Jesus and started home. When he heard his son was well, he believed even more. Are we people who believe simply because Jesus said it, or do we need some special confirmation to believe him?

March 31

The prophet Deborah, who was both a wife and judge in Israel, called for Barak to come to her. She gave him the message from God that he was to take ten thousand men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun to Mount Tabor to fight the oppressing Canaanite army led by Sisera. He said that he would not go unless she went with him. He was afraid, but she was not afraid. Are we sometimes afraid to do what God wants us to do? Do we have the faith that Deborah had, knowing that God is with us? When Barak gathered his warriors on Mount Tabor, Sisera brought nine hundred chariots against them. But God sent a flood on the Kishon River in the valley, and the chariots could not work in the mud. The Israelites won a complete victory, and Sisera fled on foot. Deborah had told Barak that the glory would go to a woman since he had been afraid. That woman turned out to be Jael. Sisera had run to her tent to hide, and when he fell asleep exhausted from the battle, she hammered a tent peg through his skull. The victory that God promised was complete. Do we have the faith to follow God's command even when we can't see how it is going to work out? Barak drew his faith from Deborah. Do we help others to have faith when theirs is weak?

Jesus said that there will be a resurrection from the dead of both good and bad people, one to life and the other to condemnation. We have to take his word on faith since it won't happen until he returns. Do we believe we will rise from the dead to eternal life if we trust him?

Jesus said there were several witnesses to him. He didn't just testify about himself. John the Baptizer testified about him; the miraculous works that he did testified about him; the Father testified about him; and the scriptures testify about him, foretelling what he would do. He said the Jewish leaders searched the scriptures to find eternal life, but those scriptures were testifying to him. When we read the Old Testament scriptures, do we look for Jesus in them? One can find prophecies that he fulfilled there. One can also find teachings that Jesus emphasized as being how God wants us to live. Do we even read the Old Testament?