



Through the Bible in a Year

a chronological study of the Bible for women

Isaiah 49-66
2 Kings 21-23
2 Chron. 33-35
Nahum

Week 31

Daily Reading Plan:

__ Isaiah 49-54
__ Isaiah 55-60
__ Isaiah 61-66
__ 2 Kings 21
__ 2 Chron. 33
__ Nahum
__ 2 Kings 22-23
__ 2 Chron. 34-35
__ REST*

*Use this day to meditate on the week's Scripture reading. If needed, use it to catch up or read ahead.

Next week:
Zephaniah
Jeremiah 1-22

MEMORY VERSE:

"For my **thoughts** are
not your thoughts,
neither are your ways
my **ways**,"
declares the **Lord**.

Isaiah 55:8

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

He's always been there. Way back in Genesis He was there. Job mentions Him as the Redeemer. David was promised an eternal throne from his descendants, preparing the way for the Messiah. The shadow of the cross has been there all along, but now Isaiah really drives home the message of the Messiah as Servant, revealing to us more of His nature.

Israel has failed to accomplish her mission, but God has promised another Servant. Name some of the things the Messiah will do:

Is. 49:1-6 _____

Is. 50:4-10 _____

Is. 53:1-12 _____

This time the task will be completed. And again we are reminded that this is a promise and hope for all nations, not just the Israelites. The scope of Isaiah starts with the immediate threat of Assyria as God's response to Israel's sins. It moves to the future conquests of Babylon and Persia. It covers both the exile and restoration of the nation of Israel. But on a broader scale, it is the story of all mankind and our journey through sin, humiliation, redemption and restoration. Isaiah helps us realize that the story of the Israelites is the story of us. We all need the promised Messiah. The Israelites latched on to the promise of a Messiah and better things to come, but they had to wait. Isaiah became one of the most familiar and frequently quoted Old Testament books. It is referred to many times in the New Testament, but was still misunderstood by many who heard.

Now we have so much more than a shadow. The reality has come and is still to come. Yet we miss it still. We don't understand because God's perfect plan is so far beyond what we can imagine. We spend money on what is not bread, instead of delighting in the richest of fare. His ways are so much higher than ours that we don't even realize the size of His shadow that falls over us. It's been there from the beginning, it is there until the end. It is the Alpha and Omega and covers all in between.

MY REVENGE ON MANASSEH

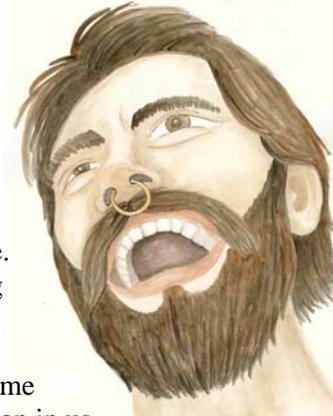
2 Kings 21:1-18 and 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

Hezekiah was one of the good God fearing kings of Judah. His son was not. In fact his son Manasseh seemed obsessed with undoing every good and godly thing his father had done. He rebuilt all the various altars of idol worship until there was more pagan influence than before the Israelites even entered the land. He even dared to bring idol worship into God's holy Temple. He killed so many innocent people that it was said that Jerusalem was filled from one end to the other with innocent blood. Surely many grieving loved ones were left behind, both fearful and angry at this cruel ruler that had such power to literally destroy their lives. No life was sacred to him. He even sacrificed his own sons into the fires of Molech. Maybe the mother (mothers) of these children was pagan too and supported this practice, but its easier for me to imagine these children being taken unwillingly from her arms. Was she witness to them being thrown alive into the flames? Did she hear their screams? Who could remain unmoved by that? Who knows how many other sacrifices he was responsible for since he was the nation's "spiritual leader". He led the whole nation away from God into witchcraft, divination and every evil thing. So the Lord sent

the commanders of the Assyrian armies to take Manasseh prisoner. How there must have been those who secretly rejoiced as a ring was put through his nose, he was bound in chains and taken away to Babylon, the home of one of the most infamously cruel nations known. Even as I read that line in 2 Chron. 33:11, I feel a twinge of satisfaction. God did not let him go unpunished. He got what he had coming to him.

But then he didn't. The very next two verses record Manasseh's repentance. Of course he's sorry while he's sitting miserable in a foreign dungeon awaiting who knows what fate! But God not only released him from bondage, but returned him to rule in his kingdom. Surely there were those back in Judah who might have been a little disappointed in that. It even seems a little irritating to me with a buffer of thousands of years between us. The fact is, we all have a portion in us that desires revenge. We have a sense of justice that wants to see people get what they deserve. So does God. That's why He did deliver revenge for Manasseh's deeds - only hundreds of years later and to a different man.

Every time I rejoice about the guy that zipped around us getting pulled over, or the gossip being gossiped about, or the rapist going in for life...that desire I have for revenge has already been satisfied. God did it **His** way, instead of my way. There still have to be boundaries and consequences and restrictions of course, but never for the purpose of revenge. It's already been done. I need to be as reluctant to take glee over the punishment of an enemy as I would be in driving a spike through Jesus' hand. To desire any less than healing and restoration for even the worst of the worst, like Manasseh, is to discard what Jesus has done. So when I am so mad or disgusted at someone that I want to see them get what they deserve, I see Jesus standing there willing and ready to receive the punishment. That really takes the steam out of it! Any word I say or action I do, or even thought I think, must be solely for the purpose of bringing that person to repentance and restoration, because that is why Jesus did what He did. He died for my sins, but he also died for all the wrongs against me, even the ones that haven't happened yet. I've had my revenge. That's humbling.



MANASSEH'S REPENTANCE

2 Chron. 33:14-17

Manasseh also give us a healthy model for our own repentance. He was sorry. He cried out to the Lord. God rescued him. But it didn't end there. His repentance was active as he sought to make things right. Describe how he did each of these things:

rebuilt - _____

removed - _____

restored - _____

Is that what you need to do?

TURNING A DEAF EAR

2 Chron. 35:20-23

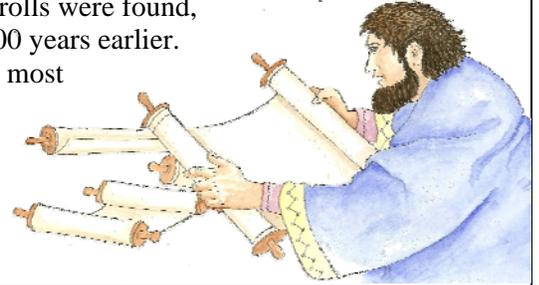
Why did Josiah refuse to listen to Neco, the king of Egypt? Did he think that God would not speak through someone like Neco? How do we know if it is really God who is speaking through an unexpected source, or is giving an unexpected message? What if Neco had delivered a message that Josiah agreed with? _____

FINDING GOD'S WORD 2 Kings 22

so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

Scrolls, like God's words would have been recorded on, were made of papyrus at this time (clay tablets previously and animal skins after the exile). The custom was to place them in the cornerstone of a new building. Apparently when the temple was being repaired, the scrolls were found, probably placed there when it was built in Solomon's day over 300 years earlier. It would take a scribe quite some time to make another copy, and most people couldn't read anyway. (Beers 168-169)

So Josiah gathered the people, **all** the people, for a reading of the Scripture. What a powerful day that must have been. Imagine the excitement as well as the remorse of that day as they realized the forgotten and neglected will of God!



What was one thing Josiah put back into practice as a result? _____

When I was in third grade, a local church gave me a nice, new red Bible. Not a little New Testament, but a complete Bible with a red leather cover. I was very pleased with it and it looked lovely sitting on my shelf. Once in awhile I looked at the words, but they really didn't make much sense to me. Then when I was in high school, I picked it up again. This time, the words swirled around me into a warm embrace that said "This is it. This is what you have been looking for all your life." It led me to ask God if He was real and if His love for me was real. He has been giving me the answer to that ever since. It was the words of God in that pretty red Bible on my shelf that drew me to my God and has continued to pull me there. I have to wonder if the Israelites experienced the same feelings. I wonder what transformation took place in the lives of those who heard the words of God read from a scroll on that day. But it didn't last.

Josiah was the last godly king. The people turned away from God and His life giving word once again. Judah would soon be taken into exile as well. Why would they turn away from God's Word again? Why do we turn away? Why do we leave our pretty Bibles sitting on their shelves, wiping the dust off so we can carry them to church on Sunday?

I am pleased and encouraged to see so many of you who are faithful in reading, studying and being transformed by God's Word. For His part, God will be faithful in using His word to accomplish His purposes.

HULDAH THE PROPHETESS 2 Kings 22:14-20 2 Chron. 34:22-28

When Josiah heard God's word read to him, he knew that his nation was in big trouble. They had not been obedient, and he knew they deserved God's wrath. He sent his spiritual advisors to inquire what should be done in response to God's words. The men went to speak to the prophetess Huldah. I don't know why they chose her. There were other prophets, like Jeremiah, but with the fate of the nation at hand they went to this woman to hear her take on the holy Scripture. It doesn't even seem especially odd. She was already known as a prophetess and these men of the highest spiritual rank sought her out, trusting her to speak for God. Did she do that often? What was her life like?

I also find it interesting that, like Deborah, we know she had a husband. I wonder what he thought about his wife being the sought after word of authority from God. Can the saying be reversed to "Behind every



great woman is a great man"? What was their marriage like? Did he admire and appreciate the ways that God had gifted her, or did he resent it? Was he supportive of her unusual ministry? How did she manage to be so non-threatening to the men around her? Was it common in that day for men to seek the opinion of a woman?

Would this kind of thing be likely to happen today? _____

Why or why not? _____

Do you think it should? _____

How hard would it be for you to speak as boldly as she did? _____

PUZZLE CLUES (taken from the NIV translation)

Across

1. number of years that Amon reigned 2Kings 21:19
4. God will live with he who is _____ Is. 57:15
7. what Josiah wanted to do with the land and the temple 2 Chron. 34:8
13. celebrated for the first time since the judges 2 Kings 23:23
14. where Manasseh was taken 2 Chron. 33:11
16. where children were sacrificed in fire to Molech 2 Kings 23:10
18. on the way Is. 51:5
20. what Manasseh did 2 Kings 21:2
21. made king of Judah by Pharaoh Neco 2 Kings 23:34
25. Isaiah's was like a sharpened sword Is. 49:2
26. will be beckoned to Is. 49:22
28. God will extend peace like this Is. 66:12
34. condition of Josiah's heart that delayed disaster 2 Kings 22:19
36. made Manasseh seek the Lord 2 Chron. 33:12
37. months of Jehoahaz's reign 2 Kings 23:31
39. Amon's son 2 Kings 21:24
41. age of Manasseh when he became king 2 Kings 21:1
42. supervised the work on the temple 2 Chron. 34:12
43. Hephizibah was Manasseh's 2 Kings 21:1
44. " _____ like one being taught" Is. 50:4
46. will spring up before all nations Is. 61:11
47. priest who found the Book of the Law in the temple 2 Kings 22:8
48. what all mankind will do before the Lord Is. 66:23

Down

2. will not return empty Is. 55:11
3. where Josiah was killed 2 Kings 23:29
5. ours are many in God's sight Is. 59:12
6. all our righteous acts are like filthy ones Is. 64:6
7. put Jehoahaz in chains 2 Kings 23:33
8. the one God esteems Is. 66:2
9. covers the earth Is. 60:2
10. what Manasseh did with the Lord's altar when he returned to Jerusalem 2 Chron. 33:16
11. engraved on Is. 49:16
12. consulted by Josiah's spiritual advisors 2 Kings 22:14
15. the blood that Manasseh shed 2 Kings 21:16
17. would come onto Jerusalem because of Manasseh 2 Kings 21:12
19. what happened to Amon 2 Kings 21:23
22. where Manasseh led the people of Judah 2 Chron. 33:9
23. descendants of Asaph 2 Chron. 35:15
24. the nation that doesn't serve God will be Is. 60:12
27. Josiah's age when he became king 2 Kings 22:1
29. place that Jehoiakim's mother was from 2 Kings 23:36
30. you will be a _____ of splendor Is. 62:3
31. what Hezekiah tore when he heard the words of the Law 2 Chron. 34:19
32. Josiah got rid of the pagan ones 2 Kings 23:5
33. where Amon's mother was from 2 Kings 21:19
35. king of this nation took Manasseh prisoner 2 Chron. 33:11
38. where Manasseh put the Asherah pole 2 Kings 21:7
40. Josiah's mother's name 2 Kings 22:1
45. king of Egypt 2 Chron. 35:20

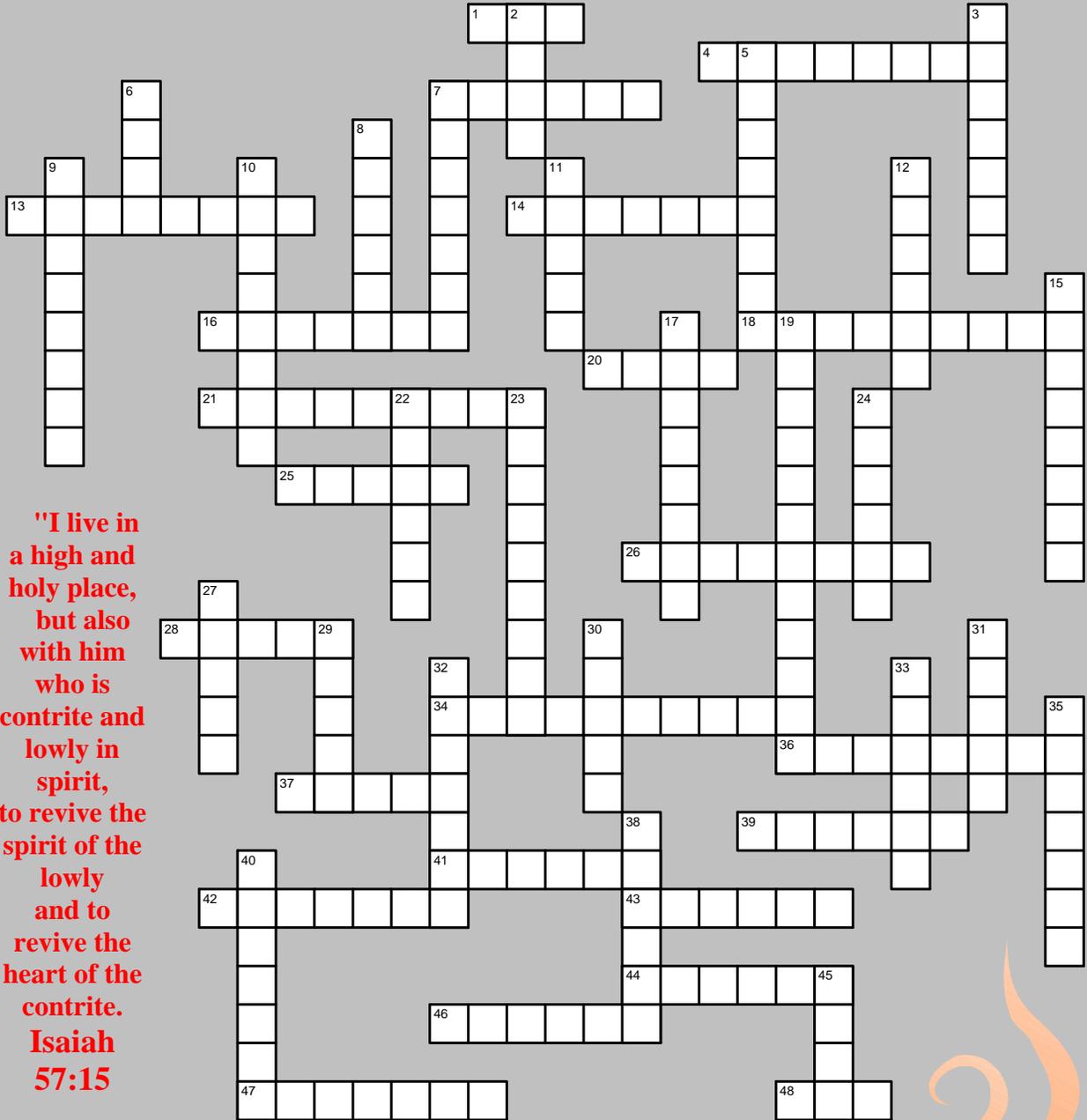
For comments or questions,
contact me at
victoryrd@hotmail.com
or for more studies visit
www.downvictoryrd.com





PUZZLE PAGE

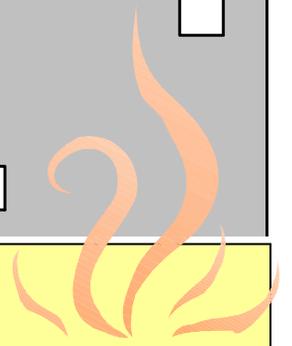
WEEK 31



**"I live in
a high and
holy place,
but also
with him
who is
contrite and
lowly in
spirit,
to revive the
spirit of the
lowly
and to
revive the
heart of the
contrite.
Isaiah
57:15**

FASTING Isaiah 58

- What did God object to in how His people fasted? _____
- What kind of fasting does He want us to do? _____



PROPHECY FULFILLED

Describe the prophecy given and draw a line to match it to its fulfillment.

Is. 50:6 _____

Is. 52:13 _____

Is 52:14, 53:2 _____

Is. 53:1,3 _____

Is. 53:4,5 _____

Is. 53:5 _____

Is. 53:6,8 _____

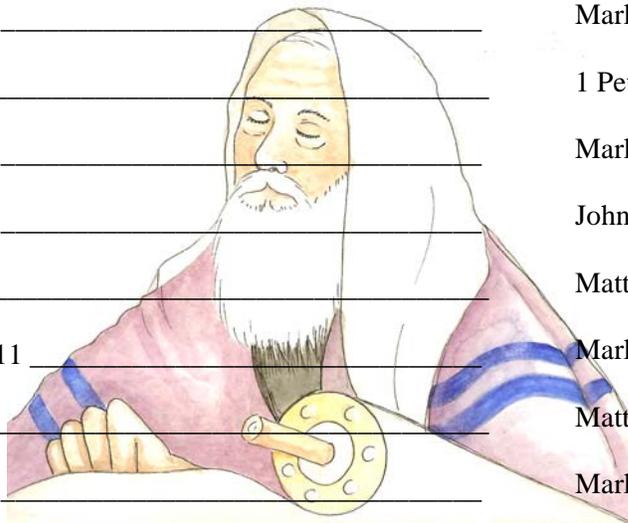
Is. 53:7,8 _____

Is. 53:9 _____

Is. 53:10,11 _____

Is. 53:12 _____

Is. 61:1,2 _____



Luke 4:18,19 _____

John 12:37,38 _____

Rom. 5:6,8 _____

Phil. 2:9,10 _____

Rom. 4:25 _____

Mark 15:4,5 _____

1 Peter 1:2 _____

Mark 15:4,5 _____

John 3:16 _____

Matt. 26:67 _____

Mark 15:15-1 _____

Matt. 27:57-60 _____

Mark 15:27,28 _____

NAHUM

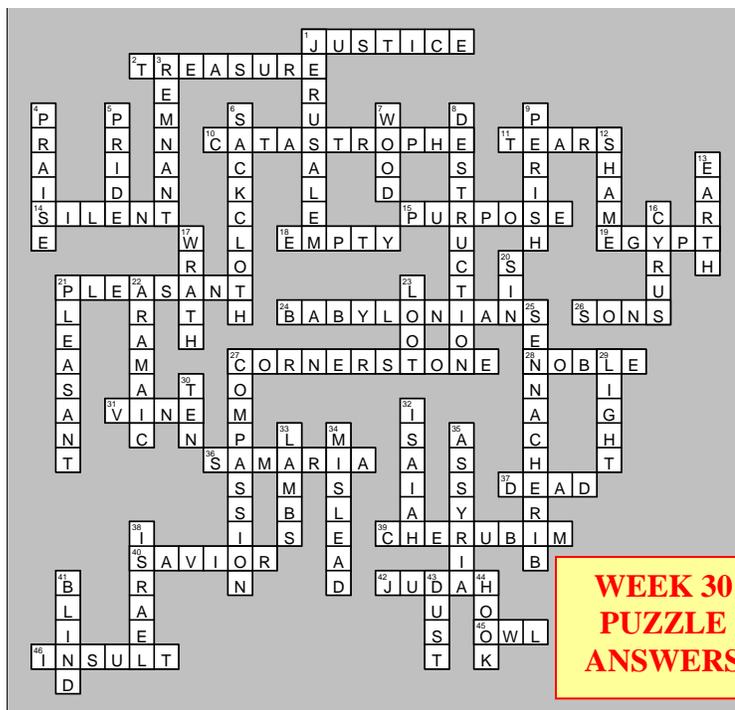
This is the sequel to the story of Jonah, taking place over one hundred years later. Those Ninevites that responded with repentance to the message that Jonah had delivered have all died and the city has returned to its cruel and wicked ways. This time the message is one of judgement.

The fascinating thing is the way that God is orchestrating the rise and fall of these nations. Perhaps there needed to be a stalling of the Assyrian's fall into destruction so that they could first be used as God's tool to discipline the Israelites, at just the time that God desired. Jonah had no way to see the big picture that God had planned. He wouldn't have been alive to witness Assyria's eventual destruction, or even the promise of it delivered through Nahum.

WANT TO READ WHAT I READ?

FINDING GOD'S WORD p.3

Beers, V. Gilbert. The Victor Journey through the Bible. Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 1996.



**WEEK 30
PUZZLE
ANSWERS**