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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 20 NUMBER 4



Your church seems to really care.

Why is that? Allen Webster

*Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.* —Sam Walter Foss

Why do you care? is an intriguing question.

It is asked as church elders bring a check to a family whose house has burned or whose medical bills have piled up. It is asked by widows when the youth group shows up on a Saturday to rake leaves and wash windows. It is asked as retired Christians go from room to room in nursing homes, sharing time and hope. It is asked by orphans as church members arrive with holiday gifts and supplies.

It is asked by cancer patients as a preacher makes his hospital rounds bringing cheer, snacks, and prayers. It is asked by addicts as Christian counselors volunteer time to help them return to families, jobs, and life. It is asked by prisoners as teachers come week by week in jail ministry. It is asked by a family grieving the loss of a child as tears flow from eye to eye down the line of supporters that snakes out of the door of the funeral home.

It is asked by students when youth ministers take time to go to their games. It is asked by children around the world as summer missionaries arrive with food, supplies, and gospel material.

Why do Christians care for those they have never met? Why is their love palpable for each other, and strong enough to overcome racial, generational, political, economic, educational, and ethnic differences? What possible reason could Christians have to do good things for their enemies and say nice things about their adversaries?

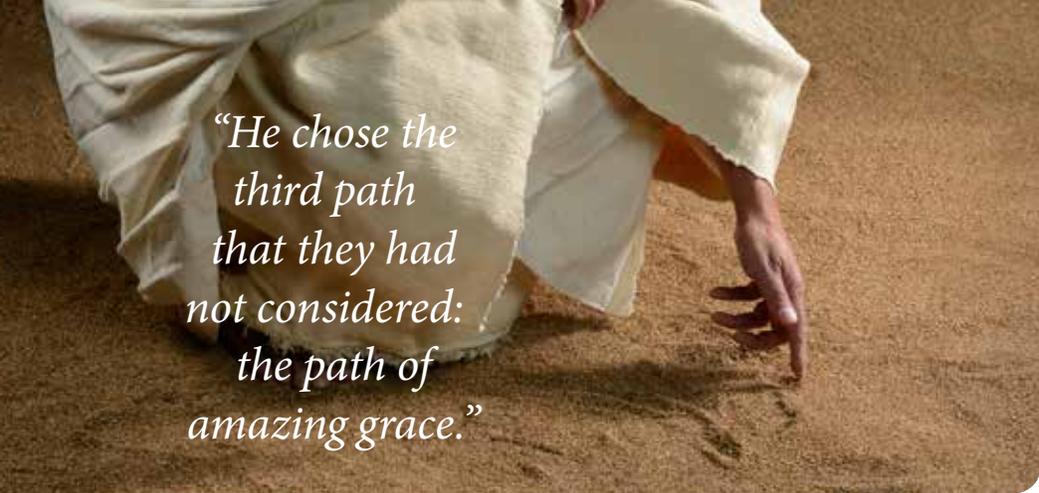
David once cried in despair, “No man cared for my soul” (Psalm 142:4). Christians care. But why? The answer lies not in who they are but in whose they are.

God is love, and His children imitate their Father (1 John 4:8, 11).

God isn't just someone we worship. He is someone we know. We have a relationship with Him and love Him as we love a family member or friend.

God is our Mentor. We look up to Him as what we aspire to be. We seek to imitate His character and behavior—especially His love (1 Thessalonians 4:9–10).

- John reveals much of God's nature:
- “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24); Christians are spiritual and not carnal.
- “God is light” (1 John 1:5); Christians enlighten and brighten.
- “God is love” (1 John 4:8); Christians care.¹



“He chose the third path that they had not considered: the path of amazing grace.”

John makes three points about God’s love in 1 John 4:

*What God Is: “God is love” (1 John 4:7–8).*² How does God love? He loves before He is loved (1 John 4:9–10). God loves even if not loved in return (Romans 5:8–10). God loves the unworthy (Ephesians 2:4–5). His love is indiscriminating. Unless Christians show this love, their religion is unauthenticated (1 Corinthians 13:1–8). Love shows that Christians have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14). Love shows that we are born of God (1 John 4:7–8). Love is God’s fingerprint on our lives.

What God Did: “He sent His Son” (1 John 4:9–11; cf. 3:16–18). Love must act. It demonstrates. It gives. Imitating God, Christian love must find an outlet.

What God Is Doing: “God abides in us” (1 John 4:12–16). Abide is a key word for John. He shows the culmination of centuries of God’s love finding new ways to get closer to us. In Genesis, God “walked” with men and men walked with God (3:8; 5:22, 24; 6:9). Later, God dwelt in the tabernacle in the midst of the Jews’ camp (Exodus 40:34). After that, His presence filled the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11). Men became used to living with God ever near them. In the New Testament church, God moved closer. He now dwells in Christians’ hearts (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Ephesians 2:20–22). In a spiritual sense, He is a constant companion.

How can others tell if God is present in Christians? By our love. Love shows that He dwells in us (1 John 4:12), and we dwell in Him (1 John 4:16). It is possible to love without being God’s child, but it is impossible to be a true child of God without loving.

Jesus loves everybody, and Christians follow His lead (Philippians 2:3–4).

Jesus commanded “that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that

ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35; cf. 15:12). This “new command” took love to a higher level. No longer do believers love others as themselves, as in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43). Now Christians love as Christ loved (Ephesians 5:1–2, 25), which is the full measure of love (John 15:13; 2 Corinthians 8:9).

In today’s sexually permissive society, it often feels as if Christians must choose between either being too soft on sin or too hard on sinners. God hates sin (Proverbs 6:16–19; Psalm 119:104), and He commands Christians to hate evil (Psalm 97:10; Romans 12:9). Yet God loves sinners and commands Christians to do so.

As in all things, Jesus set the perfect example. He hated sin yet loved sinners. For instance, He once dealt with a woman His enemies brought to Him and accused of adultery (John 8:1–11).

“Should we stone her?” they asked. (Moses’ Law stipulated death for adultery [Deuteronomy 22:22].) Jesus had the odd reputation of being both a holy prophet and a friend of harlots (Luke 7:37–50), so they thought they had Him in a trap. If He said “No,” then He showed disrespect for Moses’ law as no prophet would do. If He said, “Yes,” then He was not the friend of sinners.

These Pharisees were not truly interested in righteousness. If so, why bring only her? Both the man and woman were equally guilty. They wanted to find a way to accuse Jesus (John 8:6).

How would Jesus handle it? He could take the path of rigid holiness and have her killed. He could take the path of indulgent love and lend support to immorality. Instead He chose the third path that they had not considered: the path of amazing grace.

He “stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.” They finally demanded an an-

swer, so He stood and said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (8:6–8). He then stooped again. One by one, they dropped their rocks and left, until she was the only one left.

How did Jesus handle sin and sinners?

He reached out to her. With His enemies gone and the crisis averted, Jesus could have gone back to His sermon and let the embarrassed woman simply melt into the crowd. He chose instead to help her prepare for heaven, saying, “Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?” (8:10–11).

He assured her of forgiveness. “Neither do I condemn thee” (8:11). How sweet those words must have sounded to her. Since all her accusers were gone, and the law required at least two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6), there was no longer a case.

He challenged her to live a new life. “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). This implied a choice—she could go back to her lover or make Jesus her Lord. He wanted her to change. Jesus never pardons sinners to leave them as He found them. He requires each to deny self, take up his cross, and follow Him (Luke 9:23).

The Spirit dwells in Christians, and the fruit of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22–23).

God promised the Spirit to those who believe (John 7:39). He works in the lives of Christians through the Word (Ephesians 6:17) to mold Christians’ character into Christ’s image (2 Corinthians 3:18). How can one tell if the Spirit is having success in building character? If the Spirit’s influence is present there will be love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22–23).

To reduce expenses, a large drama class purchased only a few scripts and cut them up into the separate parts. At rehearsal, nothing went right. The director finally said: “Sit down, relax, and listen. I’ll read the whole play to you.” When he finished, one actor said: “So, that’s what it’s all about!”³ Understanding the big picture helps in seeing an individual’s role.

Why do Christians care? That’s what it’s all about.

¹ http://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_john/1-5.htm.

² The italicized points are adapted from Warren W. Weirsb, *Weirsb Bible Commentary: New Testament* (1 John 4).

³ Adapted from Weirsb (e-sword version).

POWER OF GOD

How vast is God's universe?

If the earth were a marble, then in proportion,

- The sun would be a bowling ball and would be two football fields away.
- Jupiter would be a baseball about a mile down the road.
- The nearest star (*Proxima Centauri*) would be a softball and would be 30,000 miles away.
- The Milky Way would be 60 billion miles wide. The universe is filled with billions of galaxies.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

Put Another Way . . .

If we possessed an atlas of our galaxy that devoted but a single page to each star system in the Milky Way (so that the sun and all its planets were crammed on one page), that atlas would run to more than ten million volumes of ten thousand pages each. It would take a library the size of Harvard's to house the atlas, and merely to flip through it, at the rate of a page per second, would require over ten thousand years . . . and there are a hundred million more galaxies.

—*Coming of Age in the Milky Way*, Ferris, Timothy.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7)

God's Plan for Saving Man

God's Grace, Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood, Romans 5:9

The Holy Spirit's Gospel, Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith, Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance, Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession, Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism, 1 Peter 3:21

Christian's Work, James 2:24

Christian's Hope, Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance, Revelation 2:10



Between a Rock and a . . .

Two hunters came across a bear so big that they dropped their rifles and ran for cover. One climbed a tree while the other hid in a nearby cave.

The bear was in no hurry to eat, so he sat down between the tree and the cave to reflect on his good fortune. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, the hunter in the cave came rushing out, almost ran into the waiting bear, hesitated, and then dashed back in again. The same thing happened a second time.

When he emerged the third time, his companion in the tree frantically called out, "Woody, are you crazy? Stay in the cave until he leaves!"

"Can't," panted Woody, "There's another bear in there."

Do you ever feel like you are caught between a rock and a hard place? Problems, struggles, and difficulties can come one after another and leave us feeling overwhelmed. At such times, remember the encouraging messages God has given His people:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you (James 4:8).

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).

Next time you are between two bears, remember these messages from God.

—Brent Petrillo, Denver, Colorado

*"He that is of a merry heart
hath a continual feast."*

PROVERBS 15:15

Home PAGE



Not for Sale

A well dressed couple came into a toy shop with two children. "We want some toys that will keep children entertained," the mother said. "My husband and I both work and the children are alone a great deal."

The saleswoman showed them a variety of games and play equipment, but to each there was some objection. "It seems to me," the mother finally said impatiently, "that if you knew what we are really looking for, you could find it among all these toys."

The saleswoman sighed, "I'm sorry, ma'am, but I believe what you are really looking for—what your children want—is a mother and a father, and we don't sell those here."

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

PROVERBS 22:6



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Beatitudes for Parents

Blessed are parents who make their peace with mud and spilled milk, for such is the kingdom of childhood.

Blessed are parents who refuse to compare their children with others, for each is precious in his/her own way.

Blessed are fathers and mothers who have learned to laugh, for this is the music of the child's world.

Blessed are parents who can say no without anger, for comforting to the child is the security of a firm decision.

Blessed are parents who accept the awkwardness of their growing children, letting each progress at his own speed.

Blessed are parents who are still teachable, because knowledge brings understanding and love.

Blessed are parents who love their children in the midst of a hostile world, for love is the greatest of all gifts.

—Marion E. Kinneman (1895–1985)

"Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come."

PSALM 71:18

The large hand-lettered sign in a front yard read simply:

HOME FOR SALE, BY OWNER.

Unfortunately, many people are selling their homes! There is a difference between a house and a home.

Homes are being sold every day because of moral and spiritual bankruptcy . . . because of social pressures, permissiveness, and materialism . . . because of unfaithfulness, bitterness, and divorce.

The late Batsell Barrett Baxter suggested some ways we can be guilty of selling our homes without realizing it:

Preoccupied Fathers. Several surveys indicate that most fathers spend little time with their children.

Working Mothers. As more and more mothers have left the home because of economic pressures, social problems with children have increased.

Disappearance of the Extended Family. Few young people grow up these days surrounded by close relatives.

The Invasion of the Home by TV. Television exposes family members to attitudes, philosophies, and lifestyles which undermine the family unit.

A Deluge of Outside-the-Home Activities. Too often, the home has become a motel—a place to eat, sleep, and change clothes before rushing off to the next activity.

A Disregard of Biblical Standards. Families have been traditionally established and maintained by Bible principles such as love, respect, duty, honor, humility, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, and diligence.

We may need to sell a house at some point, but let's never sell our homes.

—Unknown



If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?

Job asked this question (Job 14:14).

Men have embraced the hope of life after death in a world that is otherwise filled with doubt and despair. In the rock-hewn tombs of the Pharaohs by the Nile River were found these words: "The dead shall live again!" Such belief led the Egyptians to perfect the art of embalming, so the body could be preserved for the afterlife.

Greeks and Romans believed in life after death. The Romans often made large tombs with lamps to be kept burning on a reserve of fuel for many years. One provision in the will of Caruso was for a candle to be so constructed that it would refuel itself and burn for one hundred fifty years. It is still burning today.

Treasures were buried with great kings to supply their life beyond the grave. The American Indians often buried their dead on the side of hill, facing the sunrise,

believing in the dawn of a better day for the soul of man.

The hope of life after death has resonated through history, and in spite of the attempts of atheism to destroy that hope, it remains alive today.

These answers are being given:

The materialist says all there is to man is flesh, bone, and blood. Ask a skeptic if man shall live again and he will say no. If the materialist is correct, he will never know it! Such a philosophy is incredibly discouraging.

Science says no. But science cannot explore the realms of eternity, for that is beyond the expertise of scientists. When it comes to origins and things eternal, the lips of science are sealed, for they cannot take us where they themselves have not been.

Agnostics say we cannot know. (Thomas Huxley invented the word *agnostic*, a transliteration of a Greek word meaning "unknown.") The agnostic seeks to rob humanity of that one great hope that death will not be the end of our existence.

Jesus says, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Jesus proved the reliability of His promise when He rose from the dead never to die again. The only way we can ever hope to attain to life eternal and its accompanying joy is to believe and obey His word.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" Indeed he will. Therein is true hope!

—Tom Wacaster, Fort Worth, Texas (edited for space)

Bible QUIZ

VOLUME 20:4



Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Tips for Bible Study" as a way of saying "thanks" for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Questions Taken from the King James Version
Answers to Last Issue: **Who Did It?**

1. Cain (Genesis 4:8); 2. Methuselah (Genesis 5:27); 3. Noah (Genesis 7:11); 4. Noah (Genesis 9:20-21); 5. Nimrod (Genesis 10:9); 6. Abraham (Genesis 11:29); 7. Joseph (Genesis 37:9); 8. Abraham (Genesis 17:1-11); 9. Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:23); 10. Abimelech (Genesis 20:1-2; 26:6-7); 11. Esau (Genesis 25:29-34); 12. Jacob (Genesis 28:10-12); 13. Laban (Genesis 29:21-26); 14. Rachel (Genesis 31:19); 15. Shechem (Genesis 34:1-2); 16. Amnon (2 Samuel 13:1-22); 17. Joseph (Genesis 37:3); 18. Potiphar (Genesis 39:1-7); 19. Benjamin (Genesis 43:34); 20. Josiah (2 Kings 22:2); 21. Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14).

The Crucifixion of Jesus

Directions: Find your answers in Matthew 21; 26-27; Mark 14-16; Luke 22-23; John 18-19.

1. What Jewish feast was being celebrated when Christ was crucified? _____
2. What animal did Jesus ride when He entered Jerusalem? _____
3. On what hill was Jesus crucified? _____
4. Which disciple cut off the ear of the high priest's servant? _____
5. What was the name of that high priest's servant? _____
6. How many times did Peter deny Christ? _____
7. How many pieces of silver did Judas receive for betraying Jesus? _____
8. How did Judas identify Jesus to the soldiers? _____
9. Judas later returned the money to the priests. Then what did he do? _____
10. The priests took that money and did what with it? _____
11. Who was surprisingly released before Pontius Pilate sentenced Jesus to death? _____
12. What man was compelled to carry Jesus' cross after Him? _____
13. What were the names of Simon of Cyrene's two sons? _____
14. What was Jesus offered to drink as He was crucified? _____
15. What did the inscription above Jesus say? _____
16. In what languages was the superscription written? _____
17. What did the Roman soldier say concerning Christ? _____
18. What happened in the temple as a sign that Jesus' death had opened the way to God? _____
19. How long did the darkness last while Jesus was on the cross? _____
20. Who was a secret disciple, and what other man came to Jesus at night early in His ministry to ask a question? _____
21. Who was the first person to see the risen Christ? _____

The Bible contains a message for every state of the mind of man:

- When we are grieved, it provides comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
- When we are happy, it adds greater joy (Matthew 5:3–12; Romans 14:17; Philippians 4:4).
- When we are discouraged, it gives us courage (1 Kings 18–19; Galatians 6:9; Psalm 46:1).
- When we are lonely, it reminds us we are never alone (2 Timothy 4:17; Hebrews 13:5).
- When we are dying, it gives us assurance (Psalm 23).

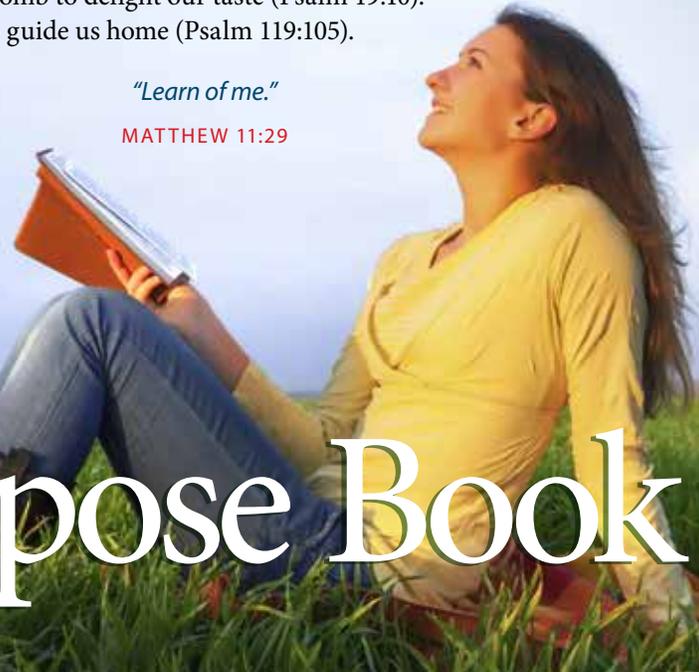
God's Word is a

- Medicine when our hearts are broken (Proverbs 4:20–23).
- Fire to warm our souls (Jeremiah 23:29).

- Hammer to break our addictions (Jeremiah 23:29).
- Seed to grow righteousness in our hearts (Luke 8:11).
- Sword to war against Satan and spiritual wickedness (Hebrews 4:12).
- Honeycomb to delight our taste (Psalm 19:10).
- Light to guide us home (Psalm 119:105).

"Learn of me."

MATTHEW 11:29



An All-Purpose Book

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front of House to House / Heart to Heart.

Recommended Resource



Todd Clippard has committed to reading the Bible daily and sharing his thoughts on each day's reading with you. A missionary, he brings a global perspective to his writing, while remaining down-to-earth. Join us each day in the reading, and share your thoughts as well. To check it out, go to chaptertochapter.com.

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Tract: That Was a Great Sermon on Patience



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Should Christian Teens Dance



Dealing with Sexual Temptations

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MIRACLES

Jesus Did Not Perform

Jesus' four biographies tell of thirty-seven specific miracles He performed during His earthly ministry. He fed thousands with a few morsels. He stilled a tempest and walked on water. He healed the deaf, blind, and the lame. He even raised the dead.

There is much to gain from a study of the miracles Jesus performed, but let us examine some miracles Jesus did not do. There were miracles which were suggested, which He could have done, but which He refused to perform.

After fasting in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by Satan who said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." That would have abused His power so He refused, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:3-4).

In Samaria, a village did not receive Him. James and John asked, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" Jesus had more power than Elias; He could have called for fire. But He rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:51-56).

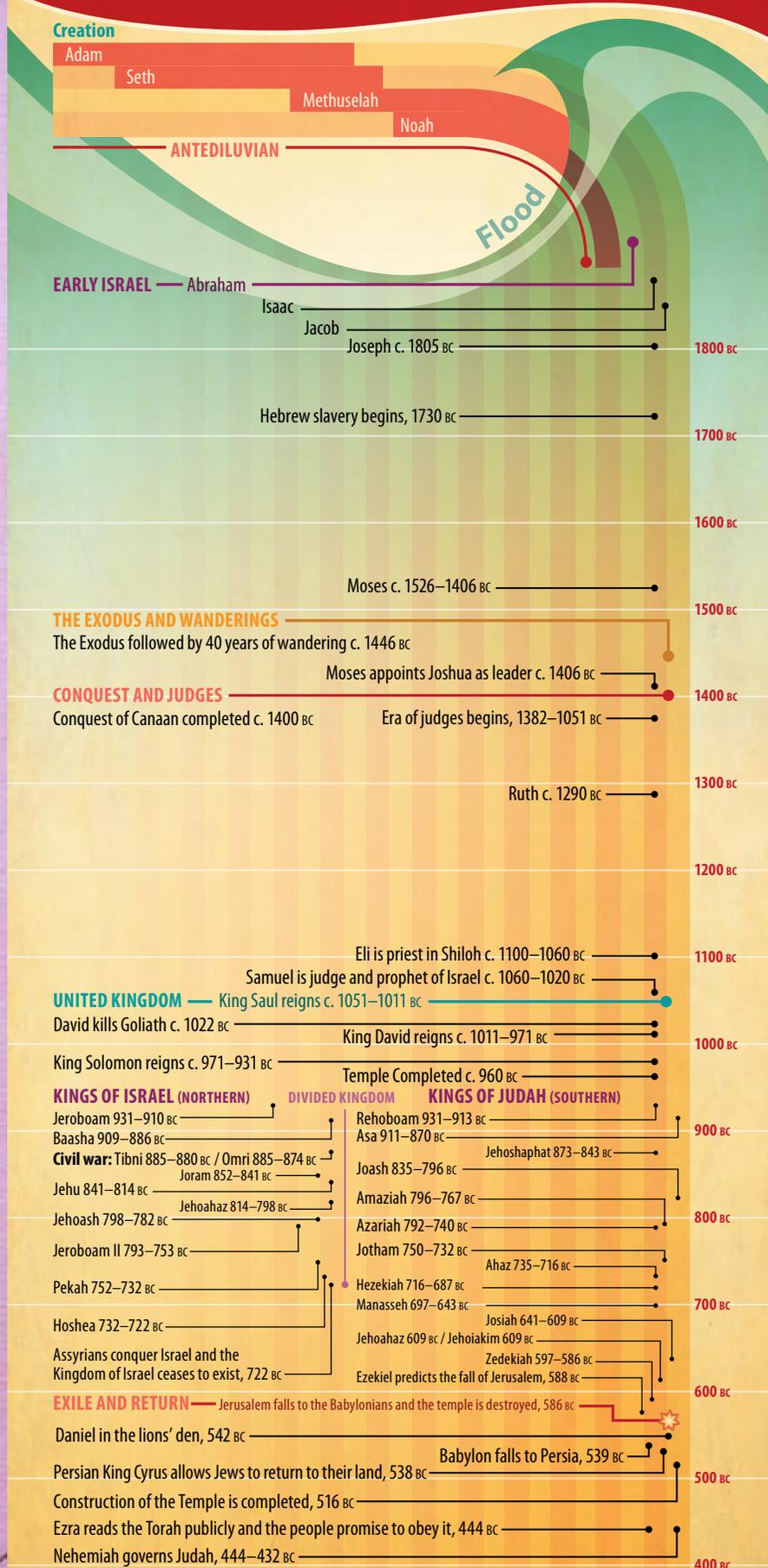
When the mob came to Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:51-54). Here is another miracle Jesus did not perform.

At the trial, His enemies tried to make Him perform miracles, but He would not. His power was not intended to satisfy their wicked curiosity (Matthew 26:67-68; Luke 23:8-9).

Finally, while on the cross, His enemies taunted, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). He was the Son of God; He had the power, but He chose to die that others might live.

A study of all the miracles of the New Testament validates the claims of Christ and His apostles (John 20:30-31). His works showed that He was God's Son (Hebrews 2:1-4). The miracles that He did not do also show much of His compassion. —Randy Vaughn

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE



The Oxford Companion to the Bible, Metzger and Coogan. The Chronology of the Old Testament, Floyd and Jones. Rose Book of Bible & Christian History

Three Kinds of *Burdens*

Burden is defined as “anything carried or endured, a load.”

Some burdens we must bear alone (Galatians 6:5).

Choosing between right or wrong
(Joshua 24:15).

Consequences of sin (2 Samuel 12:19–23).
Eternal judgment (2 Timothy 4:6–8).

Some burdens others can bear or we bear for others (Galatians 6:2).

Physical needs (Galatians 6:10).

Need for prayer (James 5:15–16).

Work of the church (1 Corinthians 3:5–9).

Some burdens we cast on the Lord (1 Peter 5:6–7).

Sin’s debt (1 Peter 1:17–19).

Anxiety (Philippians 4:6).

Physical needs (Matthew 6:25–34).

Let us faithfully carry the burdens we have to endure on our own, but let others help us carry those that can be shared. And let’s help others carry some loads. God is waiting with open arms to help you with your spiritual burdens. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

—Roger Genung



Please recycle House to House by giving this copy to your family or friends.

