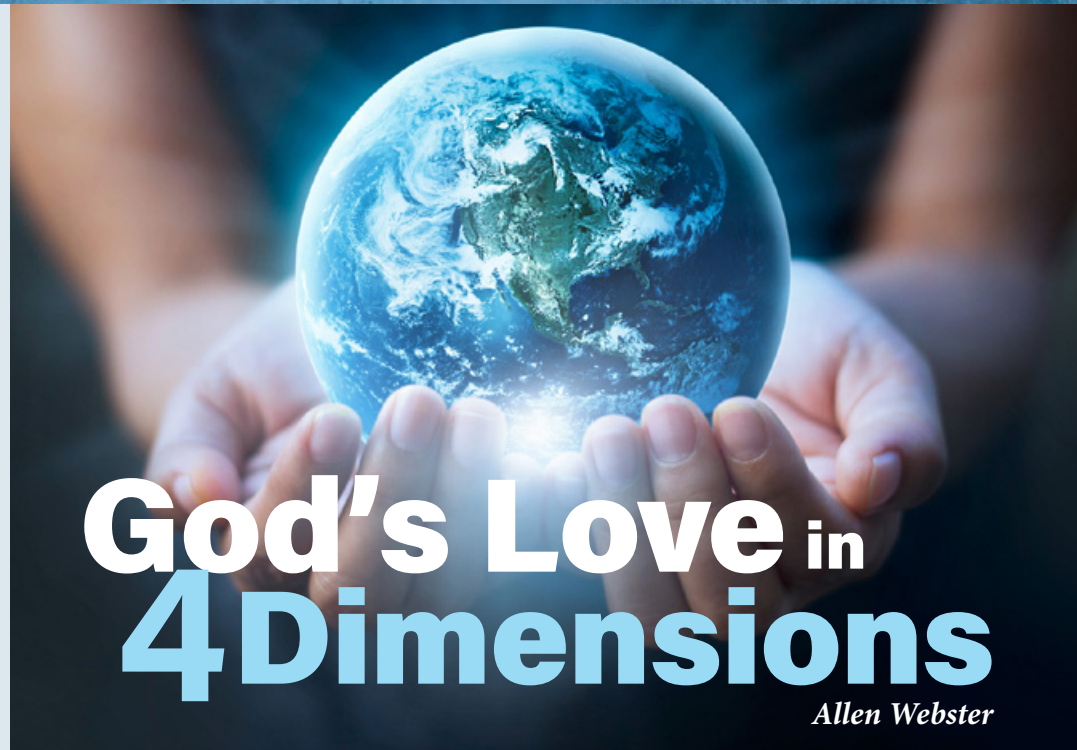


HOUSE to HOUSE  
HEART to HEART

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# House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 11



## God's Love in 4 Dimensions

Allen Webster

Words found written on an insane asylum wall are among the most beautiful and sensible ever written:

Could we with ink the ocean fill  
And were the skies of parchment made  
Were every stalk on earth a quill  
And every man a scribe by trade  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole  
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Paul taught that God's love, like a holy temple, can be thought of in terms of width, length, depth, and height (Ephesians 3:18). These dimensions are found in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

### WIDTH: GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

God's love is as boundless as space, as limitless as the ocean, as wide as the sky.

Scripture uses *world* in three senses: the universe, evil, and the great family of humanity.

The universe includes all created things (Psalm 19:4; 90:2).

Evil includes all things that oppose God (Isaiah 13:11; 1 John 5:19). Evil exists in the perishing temporal world of sinful pleasure, vanity, and pride (1 John 2:15-17). Love for the world creates enmity with God (James 4:4); Demas loved this present world and forsook Christ (2 Timothy 4:10).

The great family of humanity includes all people (Matthew 5:14; Psalm 96:13). God's love for the world extends to every person who ever lived.

The world is the broadest expanse, meaning God's love is unrestricted by the following:

- Geography: God's love extends into all the earth and to the ends of the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 10:18). It is so wide no one could travel beyond it (Psalm 139:7-12).



It reaches the whole human family, male and female, young and old (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 3:14–15, 1 Timothy 2:3–4, 6). Christ redeems out of every nation (Revelation 5:9; cf. 7:9).

- **Ethnicity:** It includes all races, tongues, tribes, and nationalities. The New Testament shows people of various nations and circumstances responding to God's love: Jews (Acts 2); Samaritans (Acts 8); Ethiopian (Acts 8); Europeans (Acts 16).
- **Accomplishment:** It includes those from all stations, levels, degrees, abilities, and attainments. God loves the poor as much as the rich, and the rich as much as the poor. Jesus died for all (John 1:29; 12:32; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Hebrews 2:9–10; 1 John 2:2).
- **Allegiance:** God loves the bad and the good (Romans 5:8–9).

A man asked his granddaughter how much she loved him. She stretched out her arms, saying, "I love you this much." When humanity asked Jesus how much He loved us, He stretched out His arms—and they nailed them there.

### **LENGTH: HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON**

This shows the length to which God's love will go. How far? God went so far as to sacrifice His Son. God went to the limit, sparing nothing. God's love may be thought of in linear terms of time:

*God loved us in the past, even before we were born* (Psalm 139:13–16). Some think God starts loving when one goes through a ritual or "lets Jesus into their heart." Christ's love had no starting point; it was there before the beginning. Since God is

love (1 John 4:8) as well as eternal, love has always existed (Psalm 90:1–2; Matthew 25:34). Names were "written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world" (Revelation 21:27; Ephesians 1:4).

*God loves us in the present.* "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). There are no interruptions in God's love. It is an unbroken line. Whatever may happen, it goes on; it has no variable; it is constant. God changes not (Malachi 3:6). Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

*God will love us in the future.* Has anyone ever told you, "I will love you forever," but did not? God will never do that. He promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). He loves from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 103:17; Jeremiah 31:3).

The prodigal son teaches the duration of God's love (Luke 15:11–24). Jesus loved His disciples "to the end" (John 13:1). He promised to be with us "to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20) and to confirm us to the end, that we may be blameless (1 Corinthians 1:8). Nothing separates us from God's love, not even death (Romans 8:38–39). In the ages to come, He will show the exceeding riches of His grace (Ephesians 2:7; cf. 3:10–11; Revelation 7:17).

### **DEPTH: WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH**

How deep is God's love? Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930) was a Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat, humanitar-

ian, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. As part of his studies on an expedition in a search of the North Pole, he measured the depth of the Arctic Ocean. At one place, as darkness approached, Nansen dropped a line that did not touch bottom. In his log, he entered the line's length and then, "Deeper than that." The next day he tried a longer line only to write again, "Deeper than that." Several times he tried with the same result. Finally, he tied all his lines together but still did not touch the bottom. His last entry was so many thousand feet and "deeper than that."

Measuring God's love is like that. We can measure God's love with the rope of a

- child's love for a parent,
- an adult child's love for a parent,
- a brother for a sister,
- a husband for a wife,
- a parent for a child,
- a patriot for his country, or
- a Christian for his God.

In each case, the line falls short. Even adding them all together ends with the entry, "Deeper than that."

Two men saw the ocean for the first time. One said, "Look at all that water." The other replied, "Just think, we are only seeing the top of it." God's love is deeper than:

- The grave. "O Death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55; cf. John 11:20–25, 29–34). The people around the cross did not understand that the death they were watching meant life.
- Sorrow (2 Samuel 12:19–20; 18:33; John 14:1; Acts 8:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). God's love is as broad as human need—sorrow, loneliness, poverty, disappointment, and tragedy.
- Pits. God brought David up out of a hor-





rible pit (Psalm 40:2) and Isaiah from the pit of corruption (Isaiah 38:17).

- Sins. No matter what sin one commits, God's love can reach it (Acts 2:22, 38; Romans 6:17–19; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Ephesians 2:1–3). It reached the prodigal in the pigpen. "He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

The poet James Rowe captured this thought:

"I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,  
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more.  
But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry,  
From the waters lifted me; now safe am I.  
Love lifted me, love lifted me; When nothing else could help,  
Love lifted me."

It is not enough to say, "I love you." Love's depth is measured by action (1 John 3:17–18). How did God show love?

- When sin covered the earth as waters cover the seas, God sent Jesus to die for you and me (1 John 4:9–11; Romans 8:32).
- He established the church (Acts 2:14–47).
- He gave the plan of salvation (Acts 2:38).
- He made a second law of pardon (Acts 8:22–24).
- He has prepared a mansion in heaven (John 14:1–3).

### HEIGHT: HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE

God's love has height. David wrote, "As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him" (Psalm 103:11; cf. 108:4). It takes

one from the depths of sin to the heights "in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:3) in the church. Ultimately, God's final purpose is that we may be with Him where He is, and behold His glory (John 14:2–3; 17:24). "When He is revealed, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2).

The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. The love of God is an ocean, and no line can sound its depths. It is a sky of immense dimensions, and no rocket can reach its heights. It is a continent of unexplored distance, and no instrument can measure its length. Its width is an unknown universe, and no survey can find its boundary. It passes knowledge (Ephesians 3:19). It is immeasurable, boundless, bottomless, and shoreless.

What should be our response to God loving us? We should love Him back. "We love him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:22; 2 Corinthians 5:14). "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us" (1 John 3:1).



## Count Your Many Blessings

Count your blessings instead of your crosses; count your gains instead of your losses;  
Count your joys instead of your woes; count your friends instead of your foes;  
Count your smiles instead of your tears; count your courage instead of your fears;  
Count your full years instead of your lean; count your kind deeds instead of your mean;  
Count your health instead of your wealth; and yes, above all,  
Count on God instead of yourself.

—Anonymous

*"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."*

PSALM 103:2

## God's Plan for Saving Man

- Divine Love:** John 3:16
- God's Grace:** Ephesians 2:8
- Christ's Blood:** Romans 5:9
- Holy Spirit's Word:** Romans 1:16
- Sinner's Faith:** Acts 16:31
- Sinner's Repentance:** Luke 13:3
- Sinner's Confession:** Romans 10:10
- Sinner's Baptism:** Acts 22:16
- Christian's Love:** Matthew 22:37
- Christian's Work:** James 2:24
- Christian's Hope:** Romans 8:24
- Christian's Endurance:** Revelation 2:10



## Things to Do to Liven Up Thanksgiving Dinner

1. Load your plate up high, then take it to the kitchen, toss it all in the blender, and take your “shake” back to the table. Announce that it’s the new Thanksgiving Weight Loss Shake.
2. When everyone goes around to say what they are thankful for, say “I’m thankful I didn’t get caught,” and refuse to say anything more.
3. Bring along old recorded football games and play them when Dad’s not looking. Make sure it is set to the last minute of the game. When he comes into the room, turn it off and turn on the regular TV.
4. Bring a date who only talks about the tragic and abusive conditions known to exist on turkey farms.
5. Mid-meal, turn to Mom and say, “See, Mom, I told you they wouldn’t notice that the turkey was past the expiration date. You were worried for nothing.”

*“A merry heart does good.”*

PROVERBS 17:22



## How’s This for Nice?

In Los Angeles, a parking citation with a five-dollar bill attached arrived at the traffic-fine bureau. An accompanying note said, “I found this ticket on the sidewalk. Not knowing if the car owner has ever seen it, I would like to make the remittance for him—in gratitude for the occasions when I have parked over the allotted time and not received a ticket.”

*“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.”*

MATTHEW 7:12

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to [www.housetohouse.com](http://www.housetohouse.com).

## The Marriage Bed

Satan tries to get unmarried couples together and keep married couples apart.

Sex is like a river—it is a wonderful blessing when kept in its proper channel. When it overflows its banks, it is dangerous.

Paul wrote that to avoid fornication,

let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (1 Corinthians 7:2–5; cf. Proverbs 5:15–19).

This physical, conjugal relationship of the marriage bed should be uninhibited by shame or guilt (Hebrews 13:4). Couples should be “always be enraptured” with each other’s love (Proverbs 5:19). In Hebrew this is literally, “err

always in her love.” It implies sexual freedom in marriage.

God designed this kind of love to meet one another’s sexual needs (Proverbs 5:15, 19, “satisfy,” Hebrew *ravah*, “to be satiated or saturated, have or drink one’s fill”<sup>1</sup>).

Husbands and wives should honestly try to satisfy the desires of each other in every way. The physical act in marriage is not primarily for recreation or procreation, but communication (“knew Eve his wife,” Genesis 4:1).

Most marriages begin with this attraction. God wants it to be cultivated throughout life. —Anonymous

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> [www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/ravah](http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/ravah).



## Seven Ways to Express Gratitude

1. Write a thank you note. Hand written notes get noticed because few take time nowadays to write and mail a personal note.
2. Send an email note or a Christian ecard ([www.dayspring.com/ecards/](http://www.dayspring.com/ecards/)).
3. Simply say, “Thank you.” Express specifically what you appreciate.
4. Send flowers with a kind note. (Your spouse might deserve a thank you.)
5. Pick up the phone and give an unexpected and warm “Thank you.”
6. Send a note taped to some fresh-baked cookies. (College students seem especially appreciative of this method.)
7. When possible and appropriate, express gratitude for someone publicly. This not only thanks them but also honors them in front of peers.

—Anonymous



# Who Sets the Standards?



It matters a great deal how we answer this question. In fact, our answer may determine where we will spend eternity.

**Many say the individual sets the standards.** They claim that each person has a right to determine within himself or herself what is right or wrong.

Solomon warned, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Man does not have the ability to see the end result of foolish choices. Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

The people in the book of Judges tried this approach: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). The book opens with a promising future for God's people but closes with one of the darkest periods in biblical history.

Throughout the book, God's anger was kindled because His people did what they incorrectly thought was right.

**Others argue that society sets the standards.** If society is the standard for what is right and wrong, then why were the people of Noah's day destroyed? They thought various forms of wickedness were acceptable, yet God judged them (Genesis 6).

Why were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed with fire and brimstone? With the exception of Lot, his wife, and his daughters, the people of these cities thought that homosexuality and other sins were acceptable (Genesis 19).

God's word has always warned of the danger of following what everyone else does. The Israelites, in the days of Samuel, wanted a king so that they could be like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8:5). They reaped bitter fruits.

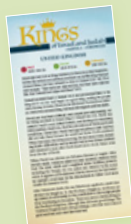
**Some others proclaim that God sets the standards.** This answer is guaranteed to be right because God is omniscient. God's way is always the right way (Hosea 14:9; Acts 13:10).

Time and again, God's children are encouraged to do what is right in God's eyes (Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 6:18; 12:25, 28; 21:9). David, Jehu, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Asa are examples of those who did what God determined to be right (1 Kings 11:33, 38; 2 Kings 10:30; 18:1-3; 22:1-2; 2 Chronicles 14:2).

God's word serves as the standard by which human beings determine right and wrong behavior. Paul wrote, "Let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind" (Philippians 3:16). God has given man everything that he needs, in His word, to determine right and wrong (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

—Wade Webster

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



## Bible Quiz

VOLUME 25:11

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Kings of Israel and Judah" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

### Answers to Previous Quizzes

**V. 25:9** A Mixed Bag of Questions: 1. He cut off a stick and threw it in the water (2 Kings 6:6); 2. Jesus, Peter (Matthew 14:25, 29); 3. Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; 18:42, 45); 4. Belshazzar (Daniel 1:7); 5. Peter (Matthew 16:23); 6. Disputed about the body of Moses (Jude 1:9); 7. Rachel (Genesis 31:34); 8. Hannah (1 Samuel 1:12-13); 9. 2 (John 1:1); 10. His hand withered, so that he could not pull it back (1 Kings 13:4); 11. Belshazzar (Daniel 5:1-6); 12. Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8-11); 13. Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-20); 14. Vashti (Esther 1:10-12); 15. Upper room, guestchamber, Jerusalem (Mark 14:15); 16. So he could be heard when he went into the holy place and so they did not die (Exodus 28:35); 17. 850 (450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah) (1 Kings 18:19); 18. Lystra (Acts 14:8, 19).

**V. 25:10** Starts with the Letter "Z": 1. Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2-3); 2. Zacharias (Luke 1:13); 3. Zadok (2 Samuel 8:17); 4. Zamzumim (Deuteronomy 2:20); 5. Zarephath (1 Kings 17:9-10); 6. Zaretan (Joshua 3:16); 7. Zeal (John 2:17); 8. Zealot (Luke 6:15); 9. Zebedee (Matthew 4:21-22); 10. Zebouim (Genesis 19:29; Deuteronomy 29:23); 11. Zebulun (Numbers 1:9); 12. Zechariah (Ezra 5:1); 13. Zedekiah (1 Kings 22:11); 14. Zelophehad (Numbers 26:33; 27:1-11); 15. Zeresh (Esther 5:10-14); 16. Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:2-8); 17. Zion (2 Samuel 5:7); 18. Ziba (2 Samuel 19:2-17).

## Getting to Know the Minor Prophets

**Directions:** Find answers in the following passages: Hosea 1:1-4, 9; Joel 1:4-7; 2:28; Amos 5:14, 24; Micah 4:1-3; 6:8; Habakkuk 1:6; 2:20; Zechariah 9:9. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- How many books make up the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
- The U.S. Library of Congress uses Micah 6:8 over its religion alcove: "What does the Lord require? To do \_\_\_\_\_, and to love mercy, and to walk \_\_\_\_\_ with your God."
- Which prophet was directed by God to name his children "Jezreel" ("God scatters") and "Lo-Ammi" ("not my people")? \_\_\_\_\_
- This prophet prophesied about a plague of locusts that would come upon the land and urged the people to pray and repent. \_\_\_\_\_
- Which prophet pictured Jesus as "triumphant and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"? \_\_\_\_\_
- Habakkuk focused on the social injustice in Judah and announced its destruction at the hands of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Which prophet was commanded by God to "Go, take for yourself a wife of harlotry"? \_\_\_\_\_
- Martin Luther King, Jr., quoted what prophet in his "I Have a Dream" speech ("let justice run down like water")? \_\_\_\_\_
- Which prophetic book envisions a future in which "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions"? \_\_\_\_\_
- "Seek \_\_\_\_\_ and not evil, that you may \_\_\_\_\_."
- "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. \_\_\_\_\_ nations shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go \_\_\_\_\_ to the mountain of the Lord!'"
- "The Lord is in His holy \_\_\_\_\_. Let all the earth keep \_\_\_\_\_ before Him."



# Chronology of the Cross

## Thursday Evening

### PASSOVER SUPPER

**MATTHEW 26:17-29; MARK 14:12-31; LUKE 22:7-38; JOHN 13:36-17:26**

Often referred to as "The Last Supper." Events include the Jews plotting Jesus' death, Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial foretold, the institution of the Lord's supper, an argument between the apostles, and Jesus' discussions and prayers with the apostles.

### GETHSEMANE

**MATTHEW 26:36-56; MARK 14:32-52; LUKE 22:40-53; JOHN 18:1-11**

These passages include the prayers and admonishing of the apostles, and the betrayal of Judas and Jesus' arrest.

## Late Thursday – Early Friday

### TRIALS

**MATTHEW 26:57-27:26; MARK 14:53-15:15; LUKE 22:47-23:25; JOHN 18:2-19:16**

These passages include the questioning and trials before Annas and Caiaphas, Peter's denials, trial before the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, scourging, and condemnation.



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

## Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at [gbntv.org](http://gbntv.org).

## I want to learn more **about the Bible!**

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer requests or comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like:



A Bible Correspondence Course



A DVD Bible Study



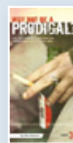
An In-Home Bible Study

## New Tracts!

- Where Do We Go When We Die?
- What Must I Do to Be Saved? (Three Answers)
- What Does It Mean to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"?
- Is Prayer the Answer?



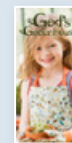
### More subjects:



Why Not Be a Prodigal Part 3



The Most Misunderstood Page in the Bible



God's Greenhouse



The Way



Lead Me to Some Soul Today



Playing Hide-n-Seek with God



Sealed by the Spirit



Biography of Saul of Tarsus

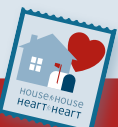


Who Is Missing Out?

Don't see the topic you need?

Visit [www.housetohouse.com](http://www.housetohouse.com) for more subjects.

VOLUME 25:11





# The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus

Friday 9:00AM – 3:00PM

## CROSS

MATTHEW 27:27–56; MARK 15:16–41; LUKE 23:26–49; JOHN 19:17–37

These passages include the persecution by the soldiers, the crucifixion, mocking, Jesus' death, the piercing of His side, and the reaction of the bystanders.

Friday between 3:00–6:00PM

## BURIAL

MATTHEW 27:57–66; MARK 15:42–47; LUKE 23:50–55; JOHN 19:38–42

These passages include the burial in the tomb and the posting of the guard.

Sunday, early morning

## RESURRECTION

MATTHEW 28:1–17; MARK 16:9–18; LUKE 23:56–24:42; JOHN 20:1–21:23

These passages include the greatest event in human history: the resurrection of Jesus the Christ, as well as His appearances to the women, the disciples, and the apostles.

We participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus when we put on Christ in baptism (Romans 6:1–6).



## How to Read a Book of the Bible

It is good to spend time in slow, detailed study, but do not neglect fast, panoramic reading.

Reading an entire book will show continuity that piecemeal reading never could. For instance, read Mark in one sitting and see its four-act drama—preparation (chapter 1), conflict (2–13), tragedy (14–15), triumph (16)—unfold at once. (It takes about an hour and fifteen minutes.)

All Bible chapters were written by a specific person to a specific people at a specific time. Our interpretation must fit the author's original purpose. Whatever the book meant at that time to those people is what it always means. "A text cannot mean what it never meant" (Fee and Stuart, 26).

It is also important to determine the structure of a book. Bible writers generally follow one of five structures (adapted from Max Anders, 142–143):

- **Chronological structure** focuses on a sequence of events. The Bible begins by

tracing the history of four early events (Genesis 1–11): creation (origin of man, 1–2), fall (sin of man, 3), flood (judgment of man, 6–9), and tower (scattering of man, 11).

- **Biographical structure** revolves around key individuals. Genesis 12–50 focuses on four patriarchs: Abraham (12–24), Isaac (25–26), Jacob (27–36), and Joseph (37–50). Judges records the lives of the thirteen deliverers God used during the dark days between Joshua and Samuel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus' brief, eventful life.

- **Geographical structure** focuses on place. The first eighteen chapters of Exodus cover various places through which Israel passed as the freed slaves traveled from Egypt to Sinai.

- **Historical structure** focuses on key events. Joshua covers conquering the Promised Land. Kings and Chronicles

record the middle history of Israel. Ezra and Nehemiah follow the return, reconstruction, and rededication of Israel to their land, homes, and religion.

- **Ideological structure** focuses on a spiritual theme. This is common in the New Testament. Jesus' biographies cover His life chronologically and biographically, but a deeper examination shows ideological emphases in these events.

In Matthew, He is the King of the Jews; in Mark, the Suffering Servant; in Luke, the compassionate Son of Man; in John, the powerful Son of God.

Paul's epistles tend to follow the ideological format. Ephesians, for instance, presents the doctrinal truth that the church is the body of Christ (chapters 1–3) and then shows how lives should be changed by that truth (chapters 4–6).

Keep this brief guide in your Bible and review as you start each section.

—Allen Webster



## Why Do You Talk So Much about *Jesus*?

An old Indian chief constantly spoke of the Lord Jesus and what He meant to him.

“Why do you talk so much about Jesus?” asked a friend.

The chief did not reply, but slowly, deliberately gathered some sticks and bits of grass. He made a circle of them.

In the circle he placed a caterpillar. Still silent, he struck a match and lit the sticks and grass.

They watched the caterpillar. As the fire caught around the circle, the trapped caterpillar began to crawl around rapidly, seeking a way of escape. As the fire advanced, the helpless caterpillar raised its head as high as it could. If the creature could have spoken, it would have said, “My help can come only from above.”

Then the chief stooped down. He extended his finger to the caterpillar, which crawled up his finger to safety.

“That,” said the chief, glowing, “was what the Lord Jesus did for me! I was lost in sin. My condition was hopeless. I was trapped. Then the Lord Jesus stooped down in love and mercy, and He drew me out of the horrible pit of sin and shame. How can I help but love Him and talk of His wondrous love and care?”

Jesus died on our behalf (Acts 2:23; Romans 5:6–11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2; 4:9–10). He intercedes for us (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1). The blood of Christ makes us safe (Exodus 12:13; Ephesians 1:7); the word of God makes us sure.

—Anonymous



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