

## *20 Lesson Curriculum*

- 20 Lesson Master Schedule
- 21 Book Chapters
- 8 Educational Study Guides
- 6 'Personal Application' Lessons
- 8 Evangel-Topic Cards
- 3 Quizzes
- 14 Sign-a-pollooza 'Life Trait' Themes
- Scripture Nuggets Template  
*(Bible verse analysis)*
- Persanote Templates  
*(Character analysis)*
- Personal Journal Template
- Worksheets / Activities

*An Educational Venture into the Realm of the Heart*



# Table of Contents

- I. The 5 E's of Teaching Fictional Novels in the classroom
- II. 20 Lesson Master Schedule
- III. Educational Study Guides w/ worksheets
  - SG1** The Ministry of Angels
  - SG2** Heaven: What is it Really Like
  - SG3** The 'Names' of God in Scripture
  - SG4** The Messianic Prophecies in Scripture
  - SG5** The Miracles of Jesus
  - SG6** The Tabernacle of Moses
  - SG7** The 'I am' Statements of Jesus
  - SG8** The Beatitudes
- IV. Personal Application Lessons
  - PA1** God Made You Unique
  - PA2** Dealing with Fear and Anger
  - PA3** Handling Conflicts with Others
  - PA4** When Really Bad Things Happen
  - PA5** What You Say Matters
  - PA6** Building Your Reputation
- V. Bible Reference Passages in the novel
- VI. Sign-a-poolooza 'Life Trait' Themes
- VII. Evangel-Topic Cards
- VIII. Classroom Templates
  - a. Scripture Nuggets
  - b. Persanotes – Fictional Characters
  - c. Persanotes – Begging Children
  - d. Personal Reading Journal
- IX. Classwork Activities
  - a. Crossword 1 – Characters
  - b. Crossword 2 – Placs & Locations
  - c. Word Search 1 - Characters
  - d. Word Search 2 – Places & Locations
- X. Assessments
  - a. Quiz 1 (Chapters 1-7)
  - b. Quiz 2 (Chapters 8-14)
  - c. Quiz 3 (Chapters 15-21)
  - d. Tabernacle Schematic
- XI. Extended Book Description

# The **5 E's** of Teaching Fictional Novels as a Thematic Unit in the Classroom

By RW Nelson

## **E**ntertain

Be passionate – don't 'preach'  
Be a performance – not a 'pickle'  
Be a participant – not a lecturer

## **E**ngage

Sign-a-pollooza  
Literature Circles  
Socratic Seminars  
Persanotes

## **E**ducate

Educational Study Guides  
Personal Reading Journals  
Bible Reference Passages  
Assessments

## **E**dify

Personal Application Lessons  
Scripture Nuggets  
Sign-a-pollooza

## **E**vangelize

Evangel-Topic Cards  
Personal Reading Journals

# No Dark Clouds - A Tale of the Christ

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## Suggested Master Teaching Schedule

Lesson	Chapter(s) Read	# Pages	Study Guides	Per App. Lesson	Evangel Topics	Scr. Nuggets
1	<i>Introduction / Template Training / Pre-read PPT / Interactive Components - read Prologue</i>					
2	1 & 2	24		PA4		
3	3	12	SG8		ET1	SN
4	4	15				
5	5	14	SG5			SN
6	6	11		PA6	ET2	
7	7 & 8	19	SG1			SN
8	9	14	SG2			SN
9	10 & 11	18			ET3	
10	12	13		PA2		SN
11	13	14			ET4	
12	14	13		PA5		
13	15	13	SG4			SN
14	16	11	SG6		ET5	SN
15	17	11			ET6	
16	18	11		PA3		
17	19	10	SG3		ET7	SN
18	20	12	SG7			SN
19	21	12		PA1	ET8	
20	Tabernacle Schematic / Journals / Scripture Nuggets / Persanotes					

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

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## SG1

## The Ministry of Angels

## SG1

Angels appear throughout the Bible more than 300 times from Genesis to Revelation, and they play a significant role in God's work in the world. The Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *angelos* both mean "messenger," "envoy," or "one who announces." In the New Testament, the meaning becomes even clearer: angels are divine messengers sent by God. They are not vague spiritual forces or imaginary symbols. They are real beings created by God, and Scripture shows them actively involved in human history. They guarded the Tree of Life in Genesis, ministered to Jesus during His earthly life, and appear again in Revelation as warriors who fight against the forces of Satan. Their presence stretches across the entire biblical story.

The Bible gives us many important truths about angels. First, angels are created beings. They are not eternal like God, nor are they glorified humans. Job 38:7 describes the angels rejoicing when God laid the foundations of the earth: "*When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*" This means angels existed before the creation of the world and witnessed God's creative power. They are part of God's heavenly order, designed to serve Him and carry out His will.

Second, angels are superior to humans in strength, ability, and glory. Psalm 8:5 says, "*Yet You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You crown him with glory and majesty.*" Humans are made in the image of God, but angels have abilities we do not possess in our earthly bodies. They do not suffer from sickness, weakness, or aging. They move with incredible speed and power. Ezekiel 1:14 describes them as appearing "*like bolts of lightning.*" At Jesus' empty tomb, the angel's appearance was described as "*like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow*" (Matthew 28:3). These descriptions show their heavenly nature—radiant, powerful, and awe-inspiring.

However, angels are not always overwhelming in appearance. Scripture also shows that angels can appear as ordinary people. In Genesis 18, Abraham welcomed three visitors who looked like normal men, yet two of them were angels. Genesis 18:2 says, "*When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him.*" Hebrews 13:2 even warns us, "*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*" Angels can blend into human society when God sends them for a specific purpose.

Angels are also incredibly strong. Their power is far beyond anything humans can imagine. When the Assyrian army threatened Israel, one angel destroyed 185,000 soldiers in a single night.

Second Kings 19:35 records, *“Then it happened that night that the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians.”* This was not a myth or exaggeration. It was a demonstration of God’s ability to protect His people through His heavenly servants.

Angels also have direct access to God’s throne. Revelation 5:11 gives a glimpse into heaven: *“Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.”* Angels worship God continually, serve Him faithfully, and carry out His commands without hesitation.

Because of their glory and power, some people in Scripture were tempted to worship angels. But angels firmly reject worship. In Revelation 22:8–9, when the apostle John fell at the feet of an angel, the angel said, *“Do not do that... Worship God.”* Angels are servants, not gods. They point all glory to the Lord.

Jesus also taught that angels watch over children. Matthew 18:10 says, *“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”* This verse suggests that angels have a protective role, especially over the vulnerable.

Hebrews 1:14 summarizes their purpose beautifully: *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?”* Angels are sent by God to help His people. They are not distant or uninvolved. They are active participants in God’s care for humanity.

Scripture gives many examples of angels ministering to people:

- To Abraham — In Genesis 18:1–16, two angels and the Lord Himself visited Abraham to deliver promises about Isaac’s birth.
- To Lot in Sodom — In Genesis 19:1, two angels rescued Lot and his family from the destruction of the city.
- To Elijah — In 1 Kings 19:5–8, an angel provided food and water to Elijah when he was exhausted and ready to die.
- To Elisha and his servant — In 2 Kings 6:8–23, an entire army of angels surrounded and protected them. Elisha prayed, and God opened the servant’s eyes to see the heavenly army.
- To Daniel — In Daniel 10, an angel strengthened Daniel and gave him wisdom before he appeared before a king.
- To Peter — In Acts 12:1–17, an angel freed Peter from prison and led him past guards and locked gates.

- To the apostles — In Acts 5:17–19, an angel opened the doors of the jail and told them to continue preaching.
- To Philip — In Acts 8:26–40, an angel directed Philip to meet the Ethiopian official who would become a believer.
- To Cornelius — In Acts 10:1–8, an angel appeared to Cornelius and prepared him to hear the gospel.
- To Paul — In Acts 27:23–24, during a violent storm at sea, an angel assured Paul that everyone on the ship would survive.

Even Jesus received ministry from angels. After He resisted Satan’s temptations in the wilderness, “*angels came and began to minister to Him*” (Matthew 4:11). Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus was in deep anguish, Luke 22:43 says, “*Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.*” If the Son of God received help from angels, it should not surprise us that God sends them to help His people today.

The Bible also reveals that angels have names and ranks. Gabriel is one of the most well-known angels. He appeared to Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist and later appeared to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus. Michael is another named angel. He appears in Daniel as a protector of God’s people and in Revelation as the leader of God’s armies. Jude 9 calls him “*the archangel Michael,*” suggesting he holds a position of authority among the angels.

How many angels exist? The Bible does not give a specific number, but it does give us clues. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said He could call “*more than twelve legions of angels*” (Matthew 26:53). A Roman legion was about 6,000 soldiers, so twelve legions would be more than 72,000 angels. Revelation 5:11 describes “*myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands*” of angels around God’s throne. The number is beyond human counting.

Angels have been active throughout human history, and they continue to serve God today. Many people may have encountered angels without realizing it. Hebrews 13:2 reminds us that this is possible. Angels are not always visible, but they are always obedient to God’s commands.

Here are several Scripture nuggets that deepen our understanding:

- 1 Corinthians 6:3 — “Do you not know that we will judge angels?” This verse shows that redeemed believers will one day share in Christ’s authority, even over angels.
- 1 Corinthians 13:1 — “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” Paul uses angels to emphasize the importance of love.
- Hebrews 13:2 — “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Angels may appear in ordinary ways.

- Revelation 1:20 — “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” Angels are connected to God’s work in the church.
- Revelation 3:5 — “He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments... and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Angels witness the faithfulness of God’s people.

In the end, angels are reminders of God’s power, protection, and presence. They are not the focus of our worship, but they are part of God’s loving care for His people. They serve Him perfectly, carry out His commands, and minister to those who belong to Christ. Their ministry is one more way God shows His faithfulness throughout history and in our lives today.

### Fill In the Blank Worksheet

1. The Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *angelos* both mean “\_\_\_\_\_,” “envoy,” or “one who announces.”
2. According to Job 38:7, angels were created \_\_\_\_\_ the creation of the earth and humans.
3. Psalm 8:5 teaches that humans were made “a little \_\_\_\_\_ than the angels.”
4. Ezekiel 1:14 describes angels as appearing like “the appearance of a \_\_\_\_\_ of lightning.”
5. Angels can appear in overwhelming glory, but they can also appear as \_\_\_\_\_ human beings, as seen in Genesis 18.
6. When the Assyrian army threatened Israel, one angel struck down \_\_\_\_\_ thousand soldiers in a single night.
7. Revelation 22:8–9 shows that angels must never be \_\_\_\_\_ by humans.
8. Matthew 18:10 teaches that angels watch over and protect \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Hebrews 1:14 says angels are “ministering spirits” sent out to render \_\_\_\_\_ for those who will inherit salvation.
10. Two angels rescued \_\_\_\_\_ and his family from the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19).
11. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said He could call more than twelve \_\_\_\_\_ of angels to help Him.
12. Revelation 5:11 describes “myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands” of angels surrounding God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

## **ANSWER KEY**

1. messenger

2. before

3. lower

4. flash

5. ordinary

6. 185

7. worshiped

8. children

9. service

10. Lot

11. legions

12. throne

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**SG2**

## **Heaven – What is it Really Like?**

**SG2**

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:1–3

Heaven is the dwelling place of God, as well as myriads upon myriads of angels, and a host of countless other heavenly creatures. Sitting at the right-hand of the Father on the Throne is Jesus, who is interceding on behalf of those who are His followers. Our world is but a small glimpse (or hazy mirror) of what Heaven is truly like (1 Corinthians 2:9; 13:12). Because of our limitations as humans we cannot (even with our wildest imaginations) fathom the depth of Heaven’s beauty, glory, riches, emotions, relationships, and magnificence. The music, praise, aromas, colors, landscapes, among many other things are currently beyond our fullest comprehension.

The root meanings for the Biblical Greek word for Heaven (*ouranus*) literally means “to cover” and “to encompass.” Simply stated then, Heaven encompasses the intimate, personal presence of God; and will be an eternal, perfect, indescribable place bestowed upon us because we are “covered” by the blood shed on the cross by Christ.

An important note to consider when discussing Heaven – is the resurrected Christ. Jesus was recognizable by His followers; He ate and cooked food; He instantly vanished from one place to another; He went through walls and into the presence of His Disciples; yet He also was flesh and bone and touched by the Disciples; He “rose” in the air; and He will be riding a horse when He returns to the earth.

In Heaven there is no sickness, pain, death, cancer, blindness, turmoil, depression, anger, war, arguments, hate, lying, stealing, nightmares, accidents, divorce, sin, growing old, fear, loneliness, anxiety, hopelessness, boredom, traffic tickets, debts, and every other form of uncertainty and human weakness. In Heaven, there will be no banks or money. Even the streets you walk upon are paved with perfect gold. However, the Bible does give us a partial glimpse of what is in Heaven.

Heaven is not a vague spiritual idea or a symbolic state of mind. Scripture presents it as a real place, filled with real activity, real relationships, and real joy. Jesus spoke of it with certainty and confidence, not as a possibility but as a promise. When He said, “I go to prepare a place for you,” He was speaking as a carpenter, a builder, and a Bridegroom preparing a home for His people. Heaven is intentional, personal, and designed with love.

The Bible describes Heaven as God's throne, the center of His rule and glory. It is the place where His will is perfectly done, where worship never ceases, and where every being is fully alive in His presence. The angels who fill Heaven are not distant or cold; they are joyful servants who celebrate every act of God and every soul redeemed by Christ.

When Scripture says we see only "in a mirror dimly," it reminds us that even our most beautiful experiences on earth — the best music, the most breathtaking landscapes, the deepest friendships — are only shadows of what awaits us. Heaven is not less real than earth; it is more real, more solid, more vibrant, more alive.

The resurrected Christ gives us the clearest picture of what life in Heaven will be like. His resurrection body was physical yet glorified, familiar yet transformed. He ate fish with His disciples, walked with them, spoke with them, and invited them to touch Him. Yet He also moved in ways beyond earthly limitations. His resurrection shows us that Heaven is not the end of our humanity but the restoration of it — perfected, healed, and made whole.

### **In Heaven:**

- Angels accompany the "new arrivers" into God's presence (Luke 16:19–31)
- God's people will receive an inheritance and treasures (Ephesians 1:18; John 1:12; Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:33; 18:22)
- We are going to reign with Christ as Children of the King and serve Him simultaneously (Revelation 22:3; 2 Timothy 2:12; Romans 5:17)
- Our bodies will be imperishable and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:52)
- We will have an everlasting home and our citizenship will be there (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 3:20)
- Christ Himself will fill us with joy and eternal pleasures (Psalm 16:11)
- Christ Himself will reward His children with crowns (2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4)
- There will be an enormous City that is 1500 miles across, 1500 miles wide, and 1500 miles high (Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 21:10–27)

Each of these truths reveals something profound about God's heart. Heaven is not simply a place we "end up" after death; it is the fulfillment of God's eternal plan to dwell with His people. The inheritance we receive is not merely material — it is relational, emotional, and spiritual. We inherit God Himself, and everything that comes with belonging to Him.

The idea that we will "reign with Christ" may feel overwhelming, but Scripture presents it as a natural extension of being God's children. We will not be passive observers in Heaven; we will have purpose, responsibility, and joy in serving the King. Our work will not be tiring or frustrating — it will be fulfilling, creative, and life-giving.

Our resurrection bodies will be free from every limitation we know now. No more fatigue, no more sickness, no more decline. We will be fully ourselves, yet without the brokenness that weighs us down on earth. Our minds will be clear, our emotions whole, our relationships pure.

The New Jerusalem — the massive city described in Revelation — reminds us that Heaven is not a lonely place. It is a community, a family, a gathering of God’s people from every nation and generation. Its size alone tells us that God intends Heaven to be filled.

### **Recognizing Loved Ones and Meeting the Saints**

A very comforting thought is that when we get to Heaven not only will we recognize and remember family members, friends, and other acquaintances; we will also recognize (and get to know) Bible characters in Heaven you have read about, as well as other “saints” who have gone before you into God’s presence throughout human history (Matthew 17:1–9). And the best part about Heaven will be seeing, conversing, and enjoying Jesus Christ face-to-face.

This truth matters deeply for anyone who has ever grieved. Heaven does not erase our earthly relationships; it redeems them. The love we shared on earth is not lost — it is completed. The friendships we began here will continue there, without misunderstanding, distance, or pain.

Imagine speaking with Moses about the Red Sea, or with Esther about courage, or with Mary about the night Jesus was born. Imagine hearing the stories of believers from every century, every culture, every background — all woven together by the grace of God.

But above all, imagine looking into the eyes of Jesus. The One who saved you. The One who carried you. The One who never left you. Heaven is Heaven because He is there.

### **Scripture Nuggets**

“And it will be said in that day, ‘Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.’” — Isaiah 25:9

“And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His Kingdom will have no end.” — Luke 1:33

“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.” — 1 Corinthians 2:9

“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” — Matthew 6:20

“And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” — Revelation 21:4

“In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; and not only me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”  
— 2 Timothy 4:8

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” — Psalm 23:6

“There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it; and His bond-servants will serve Him.” — Revelation 22:3

### Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet (12 Questions)

1. Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many \_\_\_\_\_.” (John 14:2)
2. Heaven is the \_\_\_\_\_ place of God and myriads of angels.
3. According to Scripture, our world is only a small glimpse or “hazy \_\_\_\_\_” of what Heaven is truly like.
4. The Greek word for Heaven, *ouranus*, means “to \_\_\_\_\_” and “to \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. Heaven encompasses the intimate, personal \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
6. We receive Heaven because we are “\_\_\_\_\_” by the blood of Christ.
7. After His resurrection, Jesus was both recognizable and had \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, yet He could also appear and disappear.
8. In Heaven there is no sickness, pain, death, fear, loneliness, or any form of human \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Angels accompany the “new arrivers” into God’s presence, as seen in \_\_\_\_\_ 16:19–31.
10. God’s people will receive an \_\_\_\_\_ and heavenly \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Our resurrection bodies will be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Corinthians 15:52)
12. The heavenly City described in Revelation is \_\_\_\_\_ miles long, \_\_\_\_\_ miles wide, and \_\_\_\_\_ miles high.

## **Answer Key**

1. dwelling places
2. dwelling
3. mirror
4. cover, encompass
5. presence
6. covered
7. flesh, bone
8. weakness
9. Luke
10. inheritance, treasures
11. imperishable, immortal
12. 1500, 1500, 1500

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**SG3**

## **The Names of God in Scripture**

**SG3**

*Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM "; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM (ehyeh: Yahweh) has sent me to you.' " Exodus 3:13,14*

In Biblical times, names were not only used to identify a person but represented much more. Ancient names gave a description of the bearer's characteristics, qualities, insights into their nature, traits, and personalities. For example, when Jacob (meaning 'grasping the heel') had an encounter with God in Genesis 32; his name was changed to Israel (meaning 'struggled with God'). The nation of Israel has 'struggled with God' ever since. Jesus changed Simon's name to the Aramaic name Cephas (meaning 'the rock'). In English the name is Peter, identifying the Apostle as one who was to be a leader of the early Church.

If names were very important in describing people, which is the best name used to describe God? The answer: it is impossible to describe the qualities (the very being) of God in one, even two words. Some Biblical scholars believe there are 116 names that identify who God is in the Old Testament, while other sources say there are 72 names of God. When you add the New Testament names (mostly in Greek) there are an additional 105 names of God. Regardless of how many describers, naming God is and was a monumental (but enriching) task.

### Elohim

The very first verse in the Bible used the word 'Elohim' for God. It is used 2599 times in the Old Testament and is a plural word. *"In the beginning, God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth,"* (Genesis 1:1). The name basically means, "the God of strength and power." By speaking, Elohim became the Creator of the universe. Only Elohim could create something when there was nothing to start with. One of the foundational verses of Christianity is Genesis 1:26; *"Then God (Elohim) said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."* The name of God (Elohim) may have been on John's mind

when he profoundly started his Gospel in the New Testament by using ‘Word’ (in Greek) as a name for Jesus:

*“In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word was with God (Theos), and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:1-3)*

When your life seems ‘powerless’ or you lack strength to carry on: call upon the Creator ‘Elohim’ (the God of strength and power) to strengthen you.

‘El’ -

The term ‘El’ which is related to ‘Elohim’ is used as part of a compound word to name and describe God. There are 31 distinct uses of ‘El’ in the Old Testament. Usually used in referencing a specific name for God while interacting with people. One such example is ‘El-Olam’ and another ‘El-Shaddai’.

#### El-Olam

First used in Genesis 21:33, it is mentioned 439 times in the Bible. It means ‘The Everlasting God’ and identifies Him as eternal and existing before time and space. Olam comes from the Hebrew root word implying ‘eternity’. *“From everlasting to everlasting, You are God (El-Olam),” (Psalms 90:2).*

It is interesting to note that the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament wrote, *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever,” (Hebrews 13:8)*. Jesus is also given the name *“The Alpha and the Omega”* (the beginning and the end) in Revelation 1. If you are uncertain as to your future or do not know which way to turn, remember that God has always existed – always was – and always will be; call upon ‘El-Olam’ to guide you as you venture ahead.

#### El-Shaddai

First used in Genesis 17:1,2; it is mentioned 48 times in Scripture. The name means ‘Lord God Almighty’. Abraham was ninety-nine years old and his wife (Sarah) was ninety. God told him that He was going to make a covenant with him and was going to start by allowing the married couple to have a son. *“I am Almighty God (ElShaddai) .... And I will make a covenant between Me and you.”*

Abraham, because of their age, laughed at the proclamation believing it to be impossible for Sarah to have a child. As a result, God told him that the son’s name was going to be Isaac (meaning ‘he laughs’). In the Gospels, four times Jesus says that “all things are

possible with God.” When you get to the point in your life that things appear to be impossible, call upon ‘El-Shaddai’ to change the impossible to the realm of the possible.

Other examples of ‘El - ’

- |                    |                           |               |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| • El-Elyon         | (The Most High God) (42x) | Genesis 14:18 |
| • El-Qanna         | (Jealous God) (6x)        | Exodus 20:5   |
| • El-Roi           | (The God Who Sees)        | Genesis 16:13 |
| • El-Echad         | (The One God)             | Malachi 2:10  |
| • El-Elohey Israel | (God, God of Israel)      |               |

## Adonai

A name for God first used in Genesis 15:2 when Abram addressed Him. It is mentioned 434 times in the Scripture and is a plural word. The singular word Adon means ‘Lord, Master, Owner,’ a name referring to majesty, respect, and a royal title. Bible encyclopedias refer to Adonai as signifying that God is Sovereign and does not answer to anyone other than Himself.

*“O Lord God (Adonai), You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?”*  
(Deuteronomy 3:24)

Synonyms for sovereignty include supremacy, dominance, and preeminence. Thus, I encourage you to frequently pay tribute to ‘Adonai’ in your prayer time, lifting up the name of God who is Sovereign and above all others.

## Emmanuel (or Immanuel)

The word means ‘God With Us’ and is mentioned three times in the Bible. It is first used in Scripture as part of a Messianic prophecy that is the cornerstone of Christianity: *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and will call his name Immanuel,”* (Isaiah 7:14). God leaves the glory of the Throne room in Heaven and enters the human race humbly as a child in order to (ultimately) reunite sinful man to a Holy God.

The last words Jesus tells His disciples before returning to the Throne in Heaven are *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age,”* (Matthew 28:20). As a child of God (John 1:12) when you are in the depths of loneliness or despair, call upon ‘Emmanuel’.

## Yahweh / YHWH / LORD / Jehovah

This is the most common name for God in the Bible and is used almost 7,000 times. It comes from the Hebrew word meaning ‘to be’ or ‘to exist’. It implies ‘God is our Lord and Master,’ and was first used in Genesis 2:4. The Hebrew language has twenty-two consonants, and vowels are used as dots and short line markings. Jewish history records that this name of God was considered to be so holy (that out of reverence), His name was not to be mentioned or pronounced. Thus, this name of God is simply - YHWH - with no vowels for pronunciation. It is also the only proper name of God according to Hebrew scholars.

For semantic purposes, Old Testament scribes converted YHWH into a two- syllable word (with vowels) as Yahweh. Then, starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century (A.D.) Jewish scholars combined the vowels of Adonai to YHWH which created the name ‘Jehovah’, giving the readers of the Bible a pronounced description for this name of God. When the King James Version of the Bible was translated into English (1604-1611), the scholars consistently used Jehovah for YHWH/Yahweh, resulting in most English translations using ‘Jehovah’ for the better part of the next four hundred years.

Just as ‘El’ was used in a compound word, Yahweh/Jehovah is also used as compound word combinations to name God. Two such examples are Jehovah-Raah and Jehovah-Rapha.

### Jehovah-Raah (Rohi)

This word combination is used for the name of God in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and means “The Lord is my Shepherd”. As a psalm of David (a former shepherd as a youth) it gives the implication that God cares, feeds, and protects His people (sheep). When sheep wander away, the shepherd draws them back into the herd. The duty of every shepherd is to lead and guide. Jesus Himself said that He was the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). During those times when you wander away or seemingly become lost, call upon ‘Jehovah-Raah’ to guide you back.

### Jehovah-Rapha (Rophe)

Since this name of God is a cornerstone plot of No Dark Clouds, it should be addressed in this study guide. It means ‘The Lord Heals’ and comes from the name of God in Exodus 15. After Moses led Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, the nation wandered in the wilderness of Sinai. When they arrived at a place called Marah (Exodus 15:23) the water was so bitter it was unusable. God told Moses to throw a tree into the water, and as it entered the water, God would ‘heal’ it and make it clean to drink and use. Then, God told Israel that if they obeyed Him (15:26), He would be their Healer. If you need emotional, spiritual, or physical healing, call upon ‘Jehovah Rapha’ to give you healing.

## Other Yahweh/Jehovah word combinations

- Jehovah-Jireh (The Lord Will Provide) Genesis 22:14
- Jehovah-Shalom (The Lord is Peace) Judges 6:24
- Jehovah-M'Kaddesh (The God Who Sanctifies) Leviticus 20:7,8
- Jehovah-Nissi (The Lord is my Banner) Exodus 17:8-15
- Jehovah-Sabaoth (The Lord of Hosts) (285x) 1 Samuel 1:3
- Jehovah-Tsidkenu (The Lord our Righteousness) Jer 23:6,33:16
- Jehovah-Shammah (The Lord is There) Ezekiel 48:35

## New Testament names of God / Jesus

In the New Testament all but two names of God are written in Greek. Those other two were written in Aramaic. Jesus in teaching His disciples how to pray (The Lord's Prayer), used the Aramaic word 'Abba' to describe God the Father. It simply means 'daddy'. "Our Father (Abba) who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name," (Matthew 6:9).

The other instance was when Christ (in agony) was on the cross and He says in Aramaic: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani,," (My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, Matthew 27:46) It is interesting to note that Paul told us to also pray to our 'Daddy': "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15). If you are living in fear or anxiety and just need a hug from your 'heavenly daddy', call upon Abba to comfort you.

The most common name for God in the New Testament is 'Theos' and it is used 1343 times describing both Jesus and God the Father. Another name for God/Jesus is 'kyrios (or kurios)' meaning 'Lord'. It is used 748 times. The word comes from the Greek root word 'kuros' and literally means 'supremacy or supreme in authority'. For the first three hundred years of the early Church, only Caesar could be declared 'kyrios' (supreme or god-like). When they began using the word to describe Jesus as the true 'supreme in authority,' the young Church became a threat to the entire Roman empire.

*"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord (kyrios)," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)*

Thousands upon thousands of Christians from the early Church gave their life declaring Jesus as the 'supreme' (kyrios) Son of God. Along with the many other names of God/Jesus from both the Old and New Testaments, if you ever decide to do an in-depth study of 'The Names of God', there are many resources that have already been prepared for such studies. One thing is for sure, if you ever partake in a comprehensive study of the names of God, you will most certainly be blessed and gain valuable insight into the Scripture and who God is.

## Some New Testament names identifying Christ as God

- |                          |            |                     |             |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| • The Son of the Highest | Luke 1:32  | The True God        | 1 John 5:20 |
| • God my Savior          | Luke 1:47  | Emanuel             | Matt 1:23   |
| • The Lord of Glory      | 1 Cor 2:8  | I Am                | John 8:58   |
| • Creator of all things  | Col 1:16   | First and the Last  | Rev 1:17    |
| • Wisdom of God          | 1 Cor 1:24 | Brightness of Glory | Heb 1:3     |
| • Seed of David          | Rom 1:3    | Savior of the world | 1 John 4:14 |
| • Lamb of God            | John 1:29  | Root of David       | Rev 5:5     |
| • Door of the sheep      | John 10:7  | The True Vine       | John 15:1   |
| • Bread of Life          | John 6:35  | Chief Cornerstone   | 1 Pet 2:6   |

### Scripture Nuggets:

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.”  
Proverbs 18:10

O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!” Psalms 8:1

“Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.” Psalm 20:7

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." Matthew 18:20

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. “In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, “The LORD our righteousness.” Jeremiah 23:5,6

Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace.” Judges 6:24

“Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forever.” Psalm 113:2

“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:16

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12

## Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

1. In Biblical times, names were used not only for identification but also to describe a person's \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and personality.
2. Jacob's name, meaning "grasping the heel," was changed to \_\_\_\_\_, meaning "struggled with God."
3. The name Elohim, used in Genesis 1:1, means "the God of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."
4. El-Olam means "The \_\_\_\_\_ God" and emphasizes that God existed before time and space.
5. El-Shaddai, first used in Genesis 17, means "Lord God \_\_\_\_\_," reminding believers that nothing is \_\_\_\_\_ with God.
6. The name Emmanuel (or Immanuel) means "God \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_," expressing God's presence with His people.
7. The name YHWH comes from the Hebrew word meaning "to be" or "to \_\_\_\_\_," emphasizing that God exists as Lord and Master.
8. Because the name YHWH was considered too holy to pronounce, scribes wrote it without \_\_\_\_\_, leaving only the four consonants Y-H-W-H.
9. Jehovah-Raah means "The Lord is my \_\_\_\_\_," highlighting God's care, guidance, and protection.
10. Jehovah-Rapha means "The Lord \_\_\_\_\_," first revealed when God healed the bitter waters at \_\_\_\_\_ in Exodus 15.
11. Jesus used the Aramaic word *Abba* to teach His disciples to pray, a word meaning "\_\_\_\_\_, " expressing intimacy with God the Father.
12. The Greek word *kyrios*, used 748 times in the New Testament, means "\_\_\_\_\_ in authority," a title early Christians used for Jesus even at great personal cost.

## **Answer Key**

1. characteristics; qualities
2. Israel
3. strength; power
4. Everlasting
5. Almighty; impossible
6. with us
7. exist
8. vowels
9. Shepherd
10. heals; Marah
11. daddy
12. supreme

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

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**SG4**

## **The Messianic Prophecies of Jesus**

**SG4**

*“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey.”*

Zechariah 9:9 † (John 12:12-15)

*“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities.....And by His scourging we are healed.....He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter.....He was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people.....His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death.”*

Isaiah 53:5-9 (Mark 15:5; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Cor 15:3,4; Matt 27:57-60)

The above-mentioned prophecies were written concerning the Jewish Messiah by two prophets of God. Isaiah lived seven hundred years before Christ, and Zechariah wrote that the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey – more than five hundred years before it happened. The word Messiah means “the anointed one” and throughout Jewish history, the Bible foretold Him as being their eternal King to come. During the time of Roman occupation, the people were expecting Him to conquer the invaders and set Jerusalem as the capital of the world. The prophecies read by Mishea (in the novel) all come from Isaiah 53.

From the Greek word ‘propheteia’ (and its Hebrew counterpart), prophecy means – the gift of communicating and enforcing revealed truth, to clarify something before it happens, and/or foretelling a future event. Bible prophecy implies a divine inspiration to declare the purposes of God, whether it be by rebuking and admonishing a rebellious nation (or person), comforting the afflicted, revealing hidden things, or especially foretelling things to come.

Bible scholars have documented 365 Messianic prophecies that are in the Old Testament. The first prophecy was given by God immediately after Eve confesses that the serpent deceived her into sinning in the Garden of Eden. *“And I will put enmity between you (serpent/Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”* (Genesis 3:15)

Four thousand years before Jesus, the Hebrew Scripture set into motion the Messianic prophecies starting with the virgin birth (the prophecy mentioned ‘her seed’ not ‘the seed of man’) and foretelling of an encounter between the Lord and Satan at the crucifixion. Remember, Jesus was ‘suspended between heaven and earth’ on the cross as He became sin. Numerous translations use the phrase ‘will crush his (Satan’s) head’.

The Biblical prophecies concerning Messiah can basically be placed into the following four categories:

- (1) Messiah’s birth
- (2) Messiah’s ministry
- (3) Messiah’s death and resurrection
- (4) Messiah’s reign as King of Kings.

### Messiah’s Birth

*“Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel (God with us),” Isaiah 7:14 † (Matthew 1:23)*

Family ‘trees’ and family history were very important to the Jewish nation. They meticulously kept accurate records and the Old Testament provides us with many examples. A study of Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew Chapter 1 proves this beyond a doubt. An extraordinary historical event in the ancient world provided the means for Jesus being born in Bethlehem.

Jesus’ earthly father Joseph (and the carpenter’s wife-to-be, Mary) lived in Nazareth. Caesar Augustus sent forth a decree for a census (for the purposes of taxation) to all who lived within the Roman Empire. This decree required Joseph to return to Bethlehem (the city of David, his ancestor) for the census. Thus, while they were in Bethlehem for the decree, Mary gave birth to the Son of God.

- Messiah would be a descendant of Noah’s son Shem (not his two brothers)
- Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham
- Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac (not Ishmael)
- Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob (not Esau)
- Messiah would be a descendant of Judah (not his eleven brothers)
- Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse (from the tribe of Judah)
- Messiah would be a descendant of David (not his seven brothers)
- Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
- Messiah would live in Egypt and be raised in Nazareth

## Messiah's ministry

*“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.  
Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.”*

Isaiah 35:5,6 † (Luke 7:22)

A considerable amount of the prophecies dealt with what the Messiah was going to do once He arrived. What is also remarkable, is that the Jewish religious leaders knew very well the Scriptures identifying the work of the Messiah (Isaiah 61:1,2 † (Luke 4:17-21)), yet, as Jesus was amongst them for three years, they not only rejected Him, they ultimately had Him killed.

- Messiah would have the Spirit of the Lord upon Him
- Messiah would preach to the poor
- Messiah would heal the blind, the lame, the mute, the diseased
- Messiah would set free those who are oppressed
- Messiah would be called the ‘Good Shepherd’
- Messiah would bring a ‘new’ covenant
- Messiah would be our intercessor
- Messiah would be called a Nazarene
- Messiah would be holy, merciful, compassionate, full of wisdom
- Messiah would teach in parables

## The Death and Resurrection of Messiah

*“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart  
is like wax; it is melted within me. My strength is dried up  
like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and you lay me in  
the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil doers  
has encompassed me; they have pierced my hands and my feet.”*

Psalm 22:14-16 † (Luke 24:39)

Of the 365 Messianic prophecies recorded in the Old Testament, 130 foretell either the death or resurrection of the Messiah. A comprehensive study (suggested by the author of this novel) should always include a study of Psalms 22; Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; and Daniel 9:24-26. David's psalm (chapter 22) was written a thousand years before the death of Christ and identifies 11 prophecies concerning the crucifixion. Isaiah 53 is astounding itself, and Daniel 9 is nothing short of being miraculous and profound. About 570 years before the ministry of Jesus, Daniel foretells the exact day of the crucifixion.

- Messiah will be crucified with criminals Isaiah 53:12 † Matthew 27:38
- Messiah will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver Zech 11:12,13 † Matt 26:15
- Messiah will be crucified in darkness during midday Amos 8:9 † Matt 27:45
- Messiah will drink vinegar wine Psalm 69:21 † John 19:28,29
- Messiah's garments will be 'gambled off' Psalm 22:18 † John 19:23,24
- Messiah will be smitten and spat upon Isaiah 50:6 † Matt 27:30
- Messiah betrayed by a friend Psalm 55:12-14 † Matt 26:49,50
- Messiah will be buried in a rich man's tomb Isaiah 53:9 † Matt 27:57-60
- Messiah will be resurrected Psalm 16:10 † John 20:17

### Messiah's Return and Reign

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore.” Isaiah 9:6,7

If several hundred Messianic prophecies came true concerning the initial appearance and ministry of Jesus, we can be certain that the prophecies yet to come – will happen and take place. Most of these prophecies would be placed under the category of eschatology, which in Greek means, ‘the study of the last days’ of human history as we know it. Though future prophecies still to come are throughout the Scriptures, much of the book of Daniel and virtually all the book of Revelation deal with this issue. Jesus Himself spent a great deal of time discussing His ‘second coming.’

- Messiah will be ‘The Lamb upon the Throne’
- The earth will be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord
- There will (ultimately) be a New Heaven and a New Earth
- Jesus will return on a white horse
- Jesus will return wearing a robe dipped in blood
- Jesus will return with ‘King of Kings and Lord of Lords’ written on His thigh
- Jesus will reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years

## Scripture Nuggets

“It will come about in that day,” declares the Lord GOD, “That I will make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight.” Amos 8:9

“For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” Psalm 16:10

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” Habakkuk 2:14

“Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst.” Declares the LORD. “Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people.” Zechariah 2:10,11

“And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it is written, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable Year of the LORD.” And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:17-21

“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30

## **Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet:**

1. The word "Messiah" means “the \_\_\_\_\_ one” in Hebrew, referring to the promised eternal King foretold throughout Jewish history.
2. According to Zechariah 9:9, the Messiah would come to Jerusalem humble and mounted on a \_\_\_\_\_, as fulfilled in John 12:12-15.
3. Isaiah 53:5-9 prophesies that the Messiah would be pierced through for our transgressions and crushed for our \_\_\_\_\_, and by His scourging we are healed.

4. The first Messianic prophecy appears in Genesis 3:15, where God declares enmity between the serpent and the woman, and her seed shall bruise the serpent on the \_\_\_\_\_ while the serpent bruises His heel.
5. The four main categories of Messianic prophecies are: (1) Messiah's birth, (2) Messiah's ministry, (3) Messiah's death and resurrection, and (4) Messiah's \_\_\_\_\_ as King of Kings.
6. Isaiah 7:14 states: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and she will name Him \_\_\_\_\_" (meaning "God with us").
7. Jesus was born in Bethlehem because Joseph and Mary traveled there for a Roman \_\_\_\_\_ ordered by Caesar Augustus, fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
8. During His ministry, the Messiah would heal the blind, the lame, the mute, and the diseased, as prophesied in Isaiah 35:5-6 and demonstrated when Jesus told John's disciples in Luke 7:22 that the blind receive sight and the lame \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Psalm 22:14-16 describes the Messiah's crucifixion in detail, including that they pierced His \_\_\_\_\_ and His feet.
10. One prophecy fulfilled at Jesus' death was that He would be betrayed for \_\_\_\_\_ pieces of silver, as foretold in Zechariah 11:12-13 and recorded in Matthew 26:15.
11. Isaiah 9:6 declares that a child will be born to us, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. In the future, the Messiah will return on a white horse and reign from Jerusalem for \_\_\_\_\_ years, as part of the prophecies concerning His second coming and eternal kingdom.

## **Answer Key**

1. anointed
2. donkey
3. iniquities
4. head
5. reign
6. Immanuel
7. census
8. walk (or leap)
9. hands
10. 30
11. Peace
12. 1000 (or a thousand)

## SG5

## The Miracles of Jesus

## SG5

“Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.” Matthew 9:35,36

“And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet and He healed them. So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel.” Matthew 15:29-31

Miracles are one of the most recognizable features of Jesus’ earthly ministry. They were not rare, occasional events. They were a regular part of His daily life as He traveled from village to village, teaching, preaching, and healing.

A true miracle is something that cannot be explained by natural laws, scientific understanding, or human ability. It is an act that defies logic and cannot be duplicated by human effort. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus performed miracles that demonstrated His divine authority, His compassion, and His identity as the promised Messiah.

- Jesus healed a man with a withered hand, restoring it instantly.
- He walked on the surface of the Sea of Galilee during a storm.
- He calmed that same storm simply by speaking.
- He healed a woman who had been bent over for eighteen years.
- He cleansed lepers by creating living flesh where disease had destroyed tissue.
- He raised a young man from the dead as his funeral procession was leaving the city.
- He gave sight to a man who had been blind from birth.
- He cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene.

These miracles were not illusions or symbolic stories. They were real events witnessed by real people.

Jesus performed miracles both privately and publicly. In Mark 1:29–31, He healed Peter’s mother-in-law inside a home with only a few people present. But He also performed miracles in

front of thousands, such as the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:12–17) and the feeding of the four thousand (Mark 8:1–13). He healed Samaritans, Jews, Gentiles, the wealthy, the poor, men, women, and children. He healed people in Judea, Galilee, Jordan, and Syria. He healed a Roman centurion’s servant, a synagogue leader’s daughter, and beggars on the roadside. His miracles were not limited to a certain group. Anyone who came to Him with faith received His compassion.

Jesus also revealed His heavenly glory during the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–8). This was not a healing miracle but a supernatural unveiling of His divine nature. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became radiant.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, and the Father’s voice declared, “This is My beloved Son; listen to Him!” This moment confirmed that Jesus was not merely a miracle-worker but the eternal Son of God.

Jesus healed in the Temple in Jerusalem, right in front of the religious leaders who opposed Him (Matthew 21:14). Many people were healed simply by touching the fringe of His cloak. Others were healed when Jesus spoke a word. Some were healed through unique actions, such as blind Bartimaeus (Luke 18:35–43) or the man who washed mud from his eyes after Jesus applied it (John 9:1–7). Jesus used different methods, but the result was always the same: complete healing.

There are around forty miracles of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels. Each one was chosen by the Holy Spirit to teach a specific truth. Jesus’ first recorded miracle was at a wedding in Cana, where He turned water into wine at His mother’s request (John 2:1–11).

His final miracle before His crucifixion was healing the severed ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest, during His arrest (Luke 22:50–51). Even after His resurrection, Jesus continued to perform miracles, including the miraculous catch of fish in John 21 and His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:9–11).

### **Three Greek Words for Miracles**

Biblical scholars often highlight three Greek words used to describe Jesus’ miracles:

The New Testament uses three important Greek words to describe the miracles of Jesus, and together they help us understand not only what He did, but why His actions mattered. Peter used all three terms in one powerful sentence when he spoke to the crowd at Pentecost: “*Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles (**dynamis**) and wonders (**teras**) and signs (**semeion**) which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know*” (Acts 2:22, NASB). In that single verse, the early church recognized that Jesus’ works were not ordinary events. They were divine acts that revealed His identity and mission.

The first word, *dynamis*, refers to a “mighty deed” or “power.” It points to the strength behind Jesus’ actions—the supernatural force of God breaking into human life. Our English word *dynamite* comes from this root, which helps us imagine the intensity of the power involved. When

Jesus healed the sick or calmed a storm, the miracle was not simply a helpful act; it was a display of God's authority working through Him.

The second word, *semeion*, means "sign." A sign always points beyond itself. Jesus' miracles were never random or meant to entertain. Each one revealed something about who He was and what God was doing through Him. When He fed thousands with a few loaves and fish, the miracle was not only about hunger being satisfied. It was a sign that the true Bread of Life had come into the world. His miracles invited people to look deeper and recognize the presence of the Messiah.

The third word, *teras*, is usually translated "wonder." It describes the sense of amazement people felt when they witnessed something extraordinary. These were moments that left crowds speechless, aware that they were standing in the presence of divine power. A "wonder" captures the emotional response—the awe, the astonishment, the realization that God was near.

When these three words are taken together, they paint a full picture of Jesus' miraculous works. They were powerful in their action, meaningful in their purpose, and awe-inspiring in their effect. They were not isolated events but part of a larger revelation of who Jesus truly was.

### **Why Jesus Performed Miracles**

Jesus did not perform miracles to gain attention or wealth. He never used His power to impress people or build a following. Scripture shows again and again that His miracles flowed from compassion. Matthew tells us, "*When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick*" (Matthew 14:14).

Jesus saw people who were hurting, lonely, or desperate, and His heart moved Him to act. His miracles were expressions of love—moments when the mercy of God touched human suffering.

These acts of compassion also fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah had described what would happen when the Messiah came: "*Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy*" (Isaiah 35:5–6).

Jesus' ministry matched these prophecies exactly. When John the Baptist's disciples asked Jesus if He truly was the One they had been waiting for, Jesus pointed them to the evidence of His works: "*Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM*" (Luke 7:22).

His miracles were not only acts of mercy; they were proof that the long-awaited Messiah had come. Through these miracles, Jesus showed His authority over every part of creation—over nature, sickness, spiritual darkness, and even death itself. Each miracle revealed a different aspect of His identity as the Son of God. They were not simply events in history; they were windows into the heart of God and signs of His kingdom breaking into the world.

## **Twelve Miracles of Jesus (Scripture references)**

Here are twelve miracles recorded in Scripture:

- Turns water into wine — John 2:1–11
- Walks on the water — Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52
- Heals the centurion’s servant — Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10
- Heals a paralyzed man — Matthew 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12
- Calms the stormy sea — Matthew 8:23–27; Luke 8:22–25
- Feeds 5,000 men plus families — Matthew 14:16–21; Mark 6:35–44; Luke 9:12–17
- Raises Jairus’ daughter — Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43
- Heals ten lepers — Luke 17:11–19
- Heals blind Bartimaeus — Matthew 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52
- Heals a deaf man with a speech impediment — Mark 7:31–37
- Raises Lazarus — John 11:1–44
- Miraculous catch of 153 fish — John 21:4–11

Each miracle teaches something about Jesus’ character, His mission, and His power.

### **The Ten Lepers: A Lesson in Gratitude**

One day, as Jesus traveled toward Jerusalem, He encountered ten lepers (Luke 17:11–19). They stood at a distance, as required by law, and cried out for mercy. Jesus told them to go show themselves to the priests, and as they went, they were healed. Only one returned to thank Him—and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?”

Ten were healed physically, but only one was healed spiritually. This miracle teaches that gratitude is a sign of true faith. It also shows that Jesus cares about more than physical healing. He desires to heal the heart.

In the novel *Beggar Boy*, the main character sought Jesus to heal the scars on his face. But he was told that “the Master” was more interested in healing his heart—the eternal healing. This is the greatest miracle of all. Because of Jesus, sinful people can become children of God.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

## Scripture Nuggets

“Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand!’ And he stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.” Matthew 12:13–14

“And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent word into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; and they implored Him that they might touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured.” Matthew 14:35–36

“And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.” Matthew 21:14

“While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ And immediately the leprosy left him.” Luke 5:12–13

“Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—He said to the paralytic—‘I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.’ Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.”

Luke 5:23–25

## Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet

1. A true miracle is an action that cannot be explained by nature, natural causes, or the laws of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus healed people because He felt \_\_\_\_\_ for them, not because He wanted fame or payment.
3. Jesus’ first recorded miracle took place at a wedding in Cana, where He turned \_\_\_\_\_ into wine.
4. The Greek word *dynamis* means “mighty deed” and is translated as \_\_\_\_\_ in Acts 2:22.
5. Isaiah 35:5–6 prophesied that the eyes of the \_\_\_\_\_ would be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6. Jesus calmed a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee simply by \_\_\_\_\_ to it.
7. In Luke 17, Jesus healed ten \_\_\_\_\_, but only one returned to thank Him.

8. Jesus raised \_\_\_\_\_'s daughter from the dead, demonstrating His authority over death.
9. Many people were healed simply by touching the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus' cloak.
10. Jesus healed the severed ear of \_\_\_\_\_, a servant of the high priest, during His arrest.
11. The raising of \_\_\_\_\_ in John 11 is one of Jesus' most powerful miracles, showing His authority over the grave.
12. After His resurrection, Jesus performed the miracle of the great catch of \_\_\_\_\_ fish in John 21.

### **ANSWER KEY**

1. science
2. compassion
3. water
4. miracles
5. blind
6. speaking
7. lepers
8. Jairus
9. fringe
10. Malchus
11. Lazarus
12. 153

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

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**SG6**

**The Tabernacle of Moses**

**SG6**

**Exodus 25-27; 35-40    Hebrews 8:1-7    9:23-28**

“Who serve a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the Tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain.” Hebrews 8:5

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. And behold the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.” Matthew 27:50,51

To understand the Holy Temple in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus it is important to have knowledge of the Tabernacle of Moses, which became the prototype of the future Temple structures. After Moses led the children of Israel out of bondage from Egypt, the nation spent one year at Mt. Sinai. On the mountain, God gave him the Ten Commandments and very detailed instructions to construct the Tabernacle (which was to be the place where God was to dwell with His people) and offer us a ‘blueprint’ or ‘pattern’ that reveals God’s love toward us through the life of Jesus Christ.

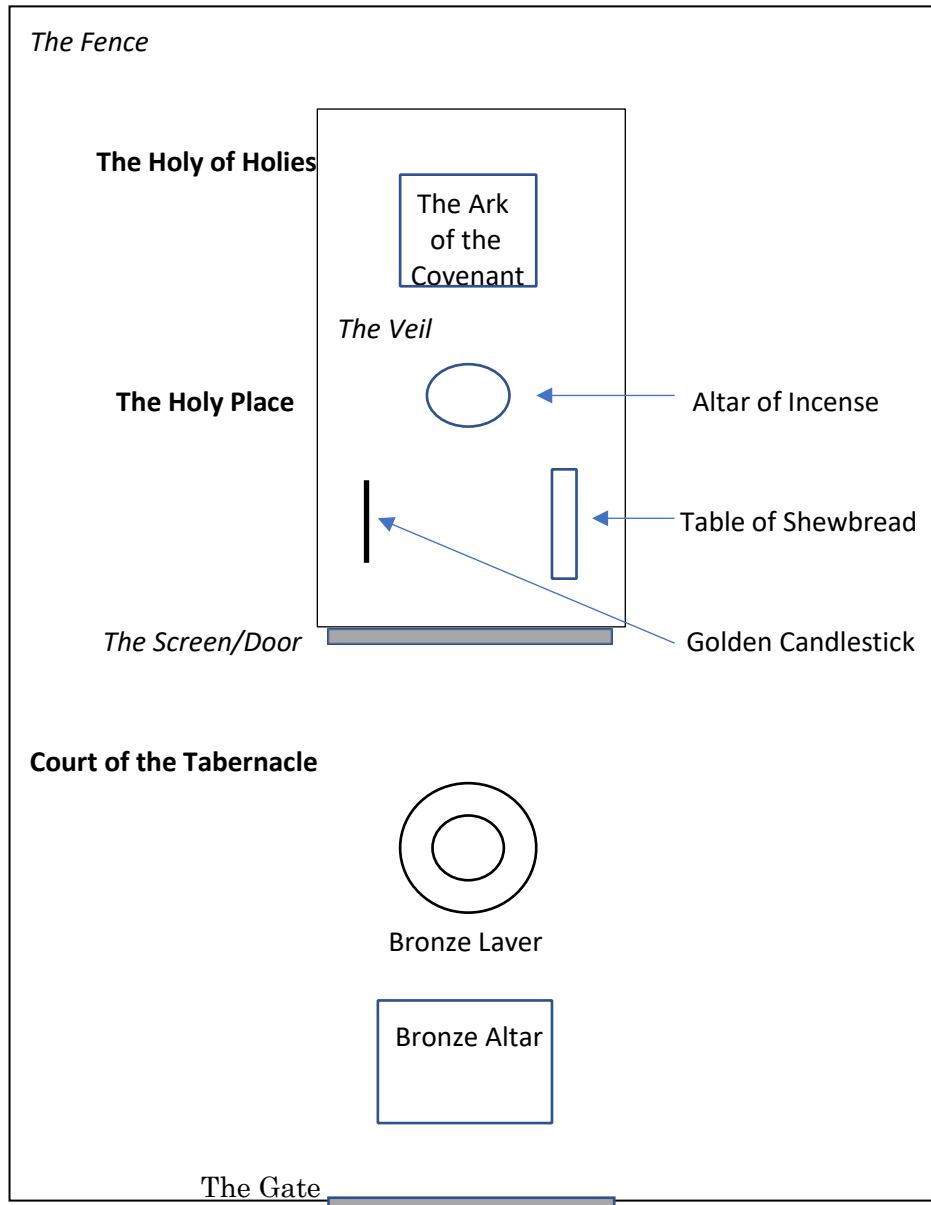
Everything about the Tabernacle revealed God’s plan for salvation and how sinful man would be able to have an intimate relationship with a Holy God. Every minute detail had meaning and purpose. There were fourteen different kinds of material used to create and build it. The colors, numbers, measurements, materials, animal skins, furniture, precious metals, designs – everything God directed Moses to build and create had eternal significance.

For example, the ‘fence’ (100 cubits x 50 cubits) separated the Tabernacle from the outside Godless world. There was only one way into the Courtyard (through a series of curtains called the Gate – Jesus is the way); only one way into the Holy Place (a series of curtains called the Screen or Door – Jesus is the truth); and only one way into the Holy of Holies (a curtain called The Veil – Jesus is the life, John 14:6) It was in the Holy of Holies where humanity (High Priest) met and had fellowship with God.

## The Tabernacle:

- The place where God was to dwell with His people
- Revealed that the holiness of God needed to be separated from the sinfulness of humanity
- The ‘earthly’ Tabernacle is but a ‘shadow’ of the one in Heaven
- Revealed a specific ‘pattern’ that needed to be followed to have an intimate personal relationship with God
- Illuminated prophetically the ministry and teachings of Jesus

# The Tabernacle of Moses



## **The Colors**

Gold – holiness, purity  
Blue – heavenly, divine  
Purple – royalty, suffering  
Scarlet – sacrifice, blood  
White – purity, righteousness

## **The Coverings**

Badger's skin  
Rams skin (dyed red)  
Goats Hair  
Fine woven cotton

## **The Materials**

Gold – holiness, purity  
Silver – redemption  
Bronze – God's judgment and examination  
Acacia wood – Jesus' humanity

## **The Furniture**

Altar of Burnt Offering – acacia wood overlaid with bronze / the grating – pure bronze (*Exodus 27:1-8*)

Bronze Laver – completely made of bronze with mirrors holding spring water (*Exodus 30:17-21*)

Golden Lampstand – solid gold providing the only light in the Holy Place (*Exodus 25:31-40*)

Table of Shewbread – acacia wood overlaid with gold (*Exodus 25:23-30*)

Altar of Incense – acacia wood overlaid with gold (*Exodus 30:1-10*)

Ark of the Covenant – acacia wood overlaid with gold/ Mercy Seat and Cherubim – pure gold (*Exodus 25:10-22*)

### **Altar of Burnt Offering (Bronze Altar)**

When someone first entered the courtyard of the Tabernacle, the very first object they saw was the Bronze Altar. This was the place where animal sacrifices were offered to God. The priests would sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed animal on the four bronze horns of the altar. The bronze itself symbolized God's judgment and His careful examination of the human heart.

This shows us an important truth: the first step toward having a close relationship with God is understanding that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin” (Hebrews 9:22). The animal on the altar became a substitute, taking the punishment that the people deserved. This pointed forward to Jesus Christ, who was crucified and became the final and perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Even later, when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, anyone who wanted to approach God still had to bring a sacrifice to the altar. It was a constant reminder that forgiveness is costly. Another important detail is that the fire on the altar was never allowed to go out. According to Leviticus 6:5–6, the very first fire was lit by God Himself, showing that the entire sacrificial system began with His power and His holiness.

Scripture nuggets:

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Galatians 2:20

“Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Romans 12:1

## **Bronze Laver**

Before the Levitical priests could enter the Holy Place, they had to wash their hands and feet at the Bronze Laver. If they skipped this step, they would die instantly when they entered. This showed how serious God was about purity and holiness. The washing was a symbolic act, reminding the priests that no one can come into God's presence without being cleansed.

The priests performed this washing every day. In the same way, we also need daily spiritual cleansing if we want to stay close to God. This is part of living a life of sanctification, which means being "set apart" for God. (GK: *hagiosmos* – 'being set apart').

Inside the basin of the laver were polished bronze mirrors. These mirrors helped the priests see themselves clearly as they washed. They were also instructed to use only fresh spring water, which symbolized purity and life. Inside the basin portion of the laver were mirrors and the priests were instructed to only use spring water.

Scripture nuggets:

"If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:8,9

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:2

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5

## **The Tabernacle Structure**

The Tabernacle itself was a simple but beautiful structure. Its walls were made of acacia wood boards covered in pure gold, and it was surrounded by layers of curtains and sacred furniture. The first room was called the Holy Place, and behind it was the Holy of Holies, separated by the Veil.

One important detail is that the Tabernacle did not have a solid roof. Instead, it was covered by four different layers, each with symbolic meaning:

- Outer layer: tough badger skins, plain and unattractive
- Second layer: rams' skins dyed red
- Third layer: woven goats' hair
- Innermost layer: ten fine linen curtains embroidered with colorful cherubim

From the outside, the Tabernacle looked dull and ordinary because of the badger skins. But once the priests stepped inside the Holy Place, they saw bright colors, beautiful designs, and furniture covered in pure gold. The inside was full of beauty, light, and meaning.

This contrast teaches a powerful spiritual truth. To the outside world, the Christian life may seem boring, restrictive, or unappealing. But those who follow Jesus discover an inner beauty, joy, and richness that the world cannot see or understand. What looks plain on the outside is filled with glory on the inside.

## **The Holy Place**

The Holy Place was the first enclosed room inside the Tabernacle. It represented a life of worship, service, and daily living that is set apart from sin and dedicated to God. Before entering, the priests passed through five pillars of acacia wood covered in gold. This is the first time God told Moses to use gold in the structure, and it symbolized God's holiness and perfect righteousness. Anyone who entered this room was stepping into a space that reflected God's character.

Inside the Holy Place were three important pieces of furniture:

- The Golden Lampstand
- The Table of Showbread
- The Altar of Incense

Each of these items had deep spiritual meaning and showed what a life close to God looks like—one filled with His light, His provision, and His presence.

## **The Table of Shewbread**

Every seven days—always on the Sabbath—the priests placed twelve fresh loaves of bread on the Table of Showbread. The twelve loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel. After the new bread was set out, the priests who served inside the Holy Place were allowed to eat the old bread. No one else could eat it because it was considered holy.

For the people of Israel, this bread was a reminder to be thankful for God's daily provision. During their years in the wilderness, they depended completely on God for food. Every morning, God provided manna, sometimes called "the bread of angels" (Exodus 16), to keep them alive. The Table of Showbread reminded them that God was the One who sustained them.

For Christians today, this table points to something even greater. It represents our dependence on Jesus, who called Himself "the bread of life." Just as Israel needed daily manna, we need daily spiritual nourishment from Christ and from His Word. He is the One who feeds our souls and gives us strength to live for God.

Scripture nuggets:

"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst." John 6:35

"But He answered and said, "It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4

## **Golden Candlestick (Lampstand)**

The Golden Lampstand stood across from the Table of Showbread and was the only piece of furniture in the Holy Place made entirely of solid gold. It had seven lamps supported by six branches shaped like almond blossoms, each holding a bowl with a wick and oil for burning. This Lampstand was the only source of light inside the Holy Place.

But its meaning went far beyond physical light. The Lampstand symbolized spiritual enlightenment—the understanding and clarity that come from walking with God in holiness. Throughout Scripture, oil is often used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who gives believers wisdom, guidance, and the light needed to follow God faithfully.

Just as the priests depended on the Lampstand to see inside the Holy Place, we depend on the Holy Spirit to help us understand God’s truth and live in His light.

Scripture nuggets:

“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

“This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” 1 John 1:5

“And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:5

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” John 14:6

## **Altar of Incense**

The Altar of Incense was the third piece of furniture in the Holy Place, standing directly in front of the Veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. This altar represented prayerful worship—the kind of constant praise and communion with God that rises like a sweet fragrance.

On top of the altar was a golden plate where the priests burned incense every morning and every evening. This happened continually, symbolizing the need for God’s people to live in ongoing prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. A golden wreath around the top reminded them of the beauty and importance of worship.

To burn the incense, the priests took hot coals from the Bronze Altar outside. The incense created a sweet-smelling aroma, showing that true worship is pleasing to God. The location of this altar is also important: it stood right in front of the Veil, the closest object to the Holy of Holies. This teaches that sincere prayer brings us near to God’s presence.

Another detail is that this altar had four horns made of gold, unlike the Bronze Altar in the courtyard, which had bronze horns. The gold horns emphasized holiness, purity, and the sacred nature of worship offered before God.

Scripture nuggets:

“And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” Ephesians 5:2

“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!” Psalms 150:6

“O magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt His name together.” Psalms 34:3

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## **The Veil**

The Veil was the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, where God’s presence rested. It hid the immediate presence of God from the priests who served in the Holy Place. The Veil was woven with blue, purple, and scarlet threads and decorated with white cherubim, showing the heavenly nature of the space behind it.

The curtain hung behind four golden pillars set in silver bases. This is different from the entrance to the Holy Place, which had five golden pillars with bronze bases. The change in materials showed increasing levels of holiness as one moved closer to God’s presence.

In the wilderness Tabernacle, only Moses and Aaron the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies through the Veil. Later, in the Temples of Jerusalem, only the High Priest was allowed to enter—and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. This strict limit showed how sacred and dangerous God’s presence was for sinful humanity.

The Veil reminded Israel that God is holy, and that access to Him is not casual. It also pointed forward to the day when God Himself would open the way into His presence through Christ.

## **The Holy of Holies – Ark of the Covenant**

The Holy of Holies was the innermost room of the Tabernacle, and it was where the **presence of God** rested. Only the High Priest could enter this sacred space, and only **once a year** on the Day of Atonement. When he entered, he carried the blood of a sacrificed lamb and sprinkled it on top of the **Mercy Seat**, which was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. When God looked at the blood, His seat of judgment became a **seat of mercy**. By His grace, the sins of the people were covered.

There were no lamps or candles in this room. **God Himself was the Light.**

The Ark of the Covenant was basically a golden chest. Inside it were three important items:

- **The Ten Commandments** (Exodus 20:1–17) *Symbolizing obedience to God’s laws*
- **Aaron’s staff** (Numbers 17:1–12) *Symbolizing obedience to God’s authority*
- **A jar of manna** (Exodus 16:32–34) *Symbolizing dependence on God and fellowship with Him*

## **The Mercy Seat and the Cherubim**

The Mercy Seat was the golden cover placed on top of the Ark. At each end stood a golden cherub, their wings stretched forward and their faces turned downward toward the Mercy Seat. In heaven, real cherubim guard the throne of God. In the Tabernacle, these golden figures symbolized the same heavenly guardians.

Their posture teaches a profound truth:

**Their eyes were fixed not on the High Priest, but on the blood.**

When the High Priest sprinkled the sacrificial blood on the Mercy Seat, God looked upon the blood—not the sins of the people. This foreshadowed the work of Christ. Today, we can approach God because He sees the blood of Jesus, not our failures.

## **Christ Fulfilled the Ark and the Mercy Seat**

The New Testament reveals that Jesus is:

- **Our High Priest** who intercedes for us
- **Our Sacrifice** whose blood atones for sin
- **Our Mercy Seat** where God meets humanity
- **Our Access** into the presence of God

Through His death, the Veil was torn and the way into the Holy of Holies was opened forever.

Scripture nuggets:

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrew 4:14-16

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, this is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:19-22

## Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet: The Tabernacle of Moses

1. The first piece of furniture inside the Courtyard was the **Altar of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Offering**, where animal sacrifices were made.
2. The Bronze Altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with \_\_\_\_\_, symbolizing God's judgment.
3. The Bronze Laver taught that the priests had to wash their hands and feet daily, symbolizing ongoing \_\_\_\_\_ for those who serve God.
4. Inside the Laver were polished \_\_\_\_\_, reminding the priests to examine themselves before entering God's presence.
5. The Holy Place was entered through five pillars of acacia wood overlaid with \_\_\_\_\_, representing God's holiness and righteousness.
6. The Table of Showbread held twelve loaves that were replaced every \_\_\_\_\_, reminding Israel of God's daily provision.
7. The Golden Lampstand was made of solid \_\_\_\_\_ and was the only source of light inside the Holy Place.
8. The oil in the Lampstand symbolized the work and presence of the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The Altar of Incense stood directly in front of the \_\_\_\_\_, symbolizing continual prayer, praise, and worship.
10. The Veil was beautifully embroidered with \_\_\_\_\_, symbolizing heavenly guardians of God's holiness.
11. Inside the Ark of the Covenant were the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that budded, and a golden pot of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. When the High Priest sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat, God's seat of judgment became a seat of \_\_\_\_\_ for the people.

## Answer Key

1. Burnt
2. bronze
3. cleansing (or *sanctification*)
4. mirrors
5. gold
6. Sabbath
7. gold
8. Holy Spirit
9. Veil
10. cherubim
11. manna
12. mercy

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

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**SG7**

## **The 'I am' Statements of Jesus**

**SG7**

Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM "; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM (ehyeh: Yahweh) has sent me to you.' " Exodus 3:13,14

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and You have seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, Truly, I say to You, before Abraham was born, I am.”  
John 8:56-58

### **SG7 PART ONE SG7**

Jesus never said that He would lead us into a spiritual light for ‘enlightenment’. Jesus never said that He would give us a list of rituals to satisfy a spiritual hunger. Jesus never said that He would show us a religious door to walk through in order to gain ‘heavenly bliss.’

What Jesus did say was that He is ‘The Light’; The Bread’; The Door.’ The Apostle John recorded seven times Jesus personally identifying Himself using the phrase ‘I am’ metaphorically to distinguish Himself above all others. If you include His reference to the ‘I AM’ statement from God speaking to Moses (during the captivity in Egypt), and two times in the Book of Revelation, Jesus referred to Himself as ‘I am’ on ten different occasions. Each instance (briefly mentioned here) show us the depth of who Jesus is and helps us understand more about Him as ‘The Son of God’ and the ‘Savior of the world.’

### **Yahweh “I AM” — The Burning Bush** Exodus 3:13–14 / John 8:56–58

In Exodus chapter three, Moses stood on holy ground in a moment that would reshape history. After four hundred years of slavery, God was sending him back to Egypt to lead His people out of bondage. Moses had once fled that land in fear, yet now the Lord called him to return as a deliverer. God revealed Himself not through thunder or earthquake, but through a bush engulfed in flames that did not burn away—a quiet miracle, steady and unconsumed, a picture of God’s eternal nature.

Moses knew the Egyptians worshiped many gods, each with a name and a story. So he asked the Lord a question that carried both humility and urgency: *“What is Your name?”* He needed to tell the Israelites—and the Egyptians—who it was that was rescuing them. God’s answer was unlike anything the ancient world had ever heard: **“I AM WHO I AM.”**

The name is as simple as it is profound. It speaks of a God who does not derive His existence from anything or anyone. He is not shaped by time, culture, or human imagination. He simply *is*. Eternal. Self-existent. Unchanging. The One who was, who is, and who will always be. In that moment, Moses learned that the God who called him was not one deity among many—He was the source of all being, the foundation of all reality.

Fifteen hundred years later, Jesus stood before religious leaders who prided themselves on knowing the Scriptures. In John 8, He spoke words that reached back to that burning bush and carried the same divine weight. He said: **“Before Abraham was born, I am.”**

The leaders did not miss the meaning. Jesus was not claiming to be a wise teacher or a prophet in a long line of prophets. He was identifying Himself with the very name spoken to Moses. He was declaring that the eternal God who revealed Himself in fire was now standing before them in human flesh.

Their reaction was immediate and violent. They picked up stones, believing He had committed blasphemy. But Jesus walked away from their grasp, untouched, because His hour had not yet come.

This moment is the doorway into all the other *I AM* statements. Before Jesus could call Himself the Bread, the Light, the Door, the Shepherd, the Resurrection, the Way, the Vine, or the Alpha and Omega, He first revealed the foundation beneath them all: **He is the eternal “I AM.”**

The same God who spoke from the burning bush now spoke face-to-face with humanity.

### **The Bread of Life**

*“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.’” — John 6:35*

The day before Jesus spoke these words, He had performed one of His most well-known miracles—feeding thousands of people with only a few loaves and fish. The crowd had eaten until they were satisfied, and the miracle stirred their excitement. They followed Him, hoping for more signs, more wonders, more moments that reminded them of the stories they had heard since childhood—stories of manna falling from heaven in the wilderness, sustaining their ancestors day after day.

But Jesus knew their hearts. He knew they were chasing Him for what He could give them, not for who He was. They longed for another miracle of bread, something they could hold in their

hands and taste on their tongues. Yet Jesus wanted to give them something far greater—something that would not fade with the next sunrise or leave them hungry again by evening.

He offered them Himself. The manna in the wilderness had been a temporary gift. It kept the people alive for a day, but it could not change their hearts or heal their souls. Jesus, however, was offering a different kind of nourishment—one that reached into the deepest places of human longing. When He said, “**I am the bread of life,**” He was inviting them to receive a life that does not spoil, weaken, or disappear. He was offering a relationship that satisfies the hunger every person carries: the hunger to be known, loved, forgiven, and made whole.

Jesus was not promising a life without difficulty. He was promising a life without emptiness. A life where the deepest thirst—the thirst for meaning, belonging, and hope—is quenched by His presence. When we partake of Him daily, when we draw near to Him in faith, we discover that He becomes our strength, our stability, and our spiritual nutrition.

This is why Paul could write with such confidence: “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*” — Galatians 2:20

Paul understood that true life—real, sustaining, soul-deep life—comes from Christ living within us. Just as bread becomes part of the body when eaten, Christ becomes the source of our inner life when we trust Him. He becomes the One who strengthens us when we feel weak, who fills us when we feel empty, and who satisfies us when the world leaves us hungry.

## **The Light of the World**

“*Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’*” — John 8:12

Light has a way of changing everything it touches. Even the smallest flame—a single candle flickering in a vast room—pushes back the darkness and reveals what was hidden. Darkness cannot argue with light; it cannot resist or overcome it. The moment light appears, darkness retreats.

Jesus chose this image intentionally. He spoke these words in the temple courts, during a festival where enormous lamps were lit to remind Israel of the pillar of fire that guided their ancestors through the wilderness. Against that backdrop of glowing light, Jesus declared something astonishing: **He Himself** is the Light—not just for Israel, but for the entire world.

Spiritually, humanity lives in darkness. The natural, sinful heart cannot see clearly. It stumbles, searching for meaning, identity, and hope in places that cannot provide them. The world around us is filled with shadows—fear, confusion, temptation, and the quiet ache of being lost. Yet Jesus steps into that darkness with a promise that reaches into every hidden place of the human soul.

The Light of Christ does not merely brighten our surroundings; it transforms us from within. It exposes lies, reveals truth, and warms the cold places of the heart. It guides our steps when we cannot see the path ahead. And it does something even more remarkable: it becomes *our* light. Jesus says that those who follow Him “will have the Light of life.” His presence becomes the lamp that steadies our feet and the sunrise that awakens hope.

John opens his Gospel with this same truth, reminding us that the Light Jesus brings is not fragile or temporary: “*In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*” *John 1:5*

## **The Door**

“*I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.*” — *John 10:9*

When Jesus called Himself *the Door*, He was speaking into a world that understood shepherding in a way we rarely do today. In ancient Israel, sheepfolds were often simple stone enclosures with a single narrow opening. At night, the shepherd himself would lie down across that opening, becoming the living “door.” Nothing could enter to harm the sheep unless it passed over his body, and no sheep could wander out into danger without stepping over him. The shepherd’s own presence became the boundary of safety, rest, and protection.

With this image, Jesus was offering more than a metaphor. He was revealing His heart. He was saying that He Himself is the entryway into salvation, peace, and spiritual security. He is not one door among many. He is not a doorway that leads to temporary relief or fleeting comfort. He is the Door that leads to life—life that is abundant, protected, and rooted in His love.

In our own lives, we encounter many “doors.” Some doors promise excitement, success, or escape. Others promise belonging or identity. Some doors we have opened eagerly, only to discover regret on the other side. Others we wish we had never touched at all. Life is full of choices that shape us, paths that tempt us, and opportunities that can either bless or wound us.

But Jesus offers a door unlike any other. To step through His door is to step into forgiveness, grace, and a relationship with the One who knows us completely. It is the greatest and most important door we will ever walk through. Every other decision in life is secondary to this one. The question is not whether we have walked through many doors before—it is whether we will open the door of our heart to Him now.

Jesus does not force His way in. He does not break down the door or demand entry. Instead, He comes gently, patiently, faithfully. He knocks. He calls. He waits for us to respond. His desire is not simply to visit but to dwell with us—to share life, to bring peace, to restore what has been broken.

This is why Scripture speaks so tenderly: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”* — Revelation 3:20

To dine with someone in biblical times was to share fellowship, intimacy, and friendship. Jesus is offering nothing less. He is not inviting us into a cold religious system but into a warm, personal relationship. He is the Door that leads us into the safety of His presence and the fullness of His love.

And once we enter through Him, we “go in and out and find pasture”—a picture of freedom, nourishment, and rest. In Him, we are not confined; we are cared for. We are not trapped; we are protected. We are not wandering; we are home.

### **The Good Shepherd**

*“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”* — John 10:11

When Jesus called Himself *the Good Shepherd*, He chose an image that every listener in His day understood instinctively. Shepherds were not distant overseers—they lived among their sheep. They walked with them through rocky hillsides, across dry valleys, and into quiet pastures. Their entire life revolved around the safety, nourishment, and well-being of the flock. A shepherd’s voice was familiar, comforting, and trusted. The sheep depended on that voice to guide them to water, to warn them of danger, and to lead them to places of rest.

In biblical times, shepherding was not a romantic or gentle profession. It was rugged, demanding, and often dangerous. Predators lurked in the shadows—wolves, lions, and thieves who sought to steal or destroy. Poisonous plants grew among the grass, and steep cliffs threatened the wandering sheep. The shepherd had to be alert, courageous, and willing to put himself between danger and the flock. His staff was not merely a symbol—it was a weapon of protection and a tool of guidance.

This is the picture Jesus chose to describe His relationship with humanity. He was not simply saying that He guides or teaches. He was revealing His heart: **He is the Shepherd who knows His sheep intimately and loves them sacrificially.**

Where other leaders might abandon the flock when danger approaches, Jesus does the opposite. He steps forward. He shields. He protects. And ultimately, He lays down His life. His death on the cross was not an accident or a tragedy—it was the deliberate act of the Good Shepherd who refused to let His sheep be lost to the enemy.

The people listening to Jesus would have understood the weight of His words. A “good” shepherd was not defined by skill alone, but by devotion. A good shepherd stayed. A good shepherd fought. A good shepherd sacrificed. Jesus was telling them—and us—that He is that Shepherd for all mankind.

He knows each of His sheep by name. He knows their fears, their wounds, their wandering tendencies, and their weaknesses. And still, He calls them His own. He leads them with tenderness, not force. He guides them with truth, not intimidation. He protects them with strength, not fear.

This is why He could say with such authority and affection: *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”* — John 10:27–28

There is a quiet, steady comfort in these words. The Good Shepherd does not lose His sheep. He does not misplace them, forget them, or abandon them. His hand is strong enough to hold them, gentle enough to guide them, and faithful enough to keep them forever.

To belong to Jesus is to be cared for by the One who sees every danger before we do, who walks ahead of us into every valley, and who stands guard over our lives with unwavering love. He is not simply a shepherd— **He is the Good Shepherd.** The One who lays down His life so that His sheep may live.

## **SG7 PART TWO SG7**

### **The Resurrection and the Life**

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.’” — John 11:25–26

The story of Lazarus is one of the most tender and powerful moments in the Gospels. Lazarus was not just another follower—he was a close friend of Jesus. He and his sisters, Mary and Martha, lived in Bethany, a small village just outside Jerusalem. Their home was a place where Jesus was welcomed, known, and loved. It was a place where He could rest, laugh, and share meals with people who cared for Him deeply.

One day, Lazarus became gravely ill. His sisters sent word to Jesus, confident that the One who healed strangers would surely come quickly for a beloved friend. But Jesus delayed. Not out of indifference, but out of purpose. He knew what He was going to do. He knew that this moment would reveal something about His identity that no miracle had yet shown.

By the time Jesus arrived in Judea, Lazarus had been dead for four days. The tomb was sealed. The mourners had gathered. Grief hung in the air like a heavy fog. Martha ran to meet Him, her heart torn between faith and sorrow. She believed Jesus could have prevented her brother’s death, yet she also believed He was still able to do something beyond human understanding.

It was into this mixture of heartbreak and hope that Jesus spoke the words that echo through every generation:

Standing outside the tomb, surrounded by friends, disciples, and religious leaders, Jesus called Lazarus by name. And the man who had been dead for four days walked out, still wrapped in burial cloths. Some who witnessed this miracle fell to their knees in awe, glorifying God. Others, hardened by jealousy and fear, ran to the Pharisees—setting in motion the plot to kill Jesus.

This moment was more than a miracle. It was a preview of what Jesus would accomplish through His own death and resurrection. Lazarus was raised back into earthly life, but Jesus would rise into eternal, unbreakable life—and offer that same life to all who believe in Him.

For everyone who believes in Jesus, physical death is not the end. Scripture speaks of a “second death” (Revelation 21:8), a final separation from God—but those who belong to Christ will never face it. The grave is not their destination. Eternity with God is their home.

This is why Paul could write with such confidence: *“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”* — Colossians 3:1–2

To be “raised up with Christ” means that His resurrection becomes the defining reality of our lives. We live with a hope that cannot be buried, a joy that cannot be stolen, and a future that cannot be taken away. Our minds are lifted above the temporary struggles of this world and anchored in the eternal life He has promised.

## **The Way, the Truth, and the Life**

*“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”* — John 14:6

These words were spoken on one of the most tender and emotionally charged nights in the life of Jesus. The shadow of His arrest was already falling across the room. The disciples could sense that something was changing, something heavy and sorrowful. Jesus had washed their feet, shared the Passover meal, and spoken of betrayal and departure. Their hearts were troubled, confused, and afraid of losing the One who had become their teacher, their friend, and their hope.

Sensing their fear, Jesus spoke comfort into the room. He told them He was going away to prepare a place for them—a home in the Father’s presence, a place of belonging and eternal peace. But His words stirred questions. Thomas, honest and earnest, voiced what the others were thinking: *“Lord, we do not know where You are going; how do we know the way?”*

Jesus responded with a declaration that reaches across centuries and speaks to every searching heart: **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”**

In a world filled with countless paths, philosophies, and voices claiming to offer meaning, Jesus stands alone. He is not one option among many. He is the only path that leads to the Father, the only truth that does not shift with culture or time, and the only life that does not

fade with age or circumstance. His resurrection would soon prove the truth of His words—death could not hold Him, and because of that, eternal life is offered to all who believe.

This is why Scripture speaks so clearly: *“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”* — Acts 4:12

The world offers many voices, many promises, and many “ways,” but only one leads to the Father. Only one brings forgiveness. Only one brings peace. Only one brings eternal life.

## **The Vine**

*“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”* — John 15:5

As Jesus and His disciples left the upper room after the Last Supper, the night was heavy with meaning. The air carried the quiet tension of what was coming—the betrayal, the arrest, the cross. They walked through the cool darkness toward the Garden of Gethsemane, passing vineyards that clung to the hillsides around Jerusalem. It was in this setting, with the scent of grapevines in the air and the weight of His final hours pressing upon Him, that Jesus spoke one of His most intimate and instructive metaphors.

He told them that He was the vine, the true source of life. God the Father was the vinedresser—the One who tends, prunes, and cares for the vineyard. And the disciples were the branches, designed to bear fruit but completely dependent on their connection to the vine.

In the ancient world, everyone understood the importance of the vine. Grapes could not grow unless the branches remained firmly attached to the vine, drawing nourishment from its roots. A branch separated from the vine might look alive for a moment, but it would soon wither. Life flowed only through connection.

The Greek word He used for “abide” (*meno*) carries a rich meaning. It speaks of remaining, dwelling, enduring, staying united as one. It is the language of relationship, not performance. Jesus was not asking His disciples to strive harder or produce fruit by their own effort. He was inviting them to stay close—to remain in Him, to draw life from Him, to let His presence become their source of strength.

He knew that the next day He would be crucified. He knew the disciples would face fear, confusion, and persecution. He knew they would be tempted to rely on their own understanding or their own courage. So He gave them this truth to anchor their hearts: **“Apart from Me you can do nothing.”**

It was not a rebuke—it was a reassurance. They were never meant to carry the weight of ministry, obedience, or spiritual growth on their own shoulders. The fruit God desired—love, joy,

peace, patience, kindness, and all the rest—would grow naturally as they remained connected to Christ. The vine would supply everything the branches needed.

This truth is just as vital today. We often try to produce spiritual fruit through effort, discipline, or willpower. But Jesus reminds us that fruit is not manufactured—it is grown. It is the natural result of abiding in Him, of letting His life flow through ours.

Paul echoes this same truth when he writes: *“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”* — Colossians 2:6–7

To be “firmly rooted” in Christ is to let His presence shape our thoughts, guide our decisions, and sustain our hearts. It is to walk with Him daily, drawing strength from His love and wisdom from His Word. And as we do, fruit begins to appear—quietly, steadily, naturally.

### **The Alpha and the Omega**

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* — Revelation 1:8 (also echoed in Revelation 22:13)

When Jesus appeared to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, the moment was overwhelming in both glory and tenderness. John, exiled for his faith, was living in isolation—cut off from the churches he loved, surrounded by the harshness of Roman punishment. Yet it was in that lonely place that Jesus revealed Himself more clearly than John had ever seen Him before. The risen Christ stood before him in radiant majesty, and His voice carried the weight of eternity.

In this breathtaking vision, Jesus described Himself with a title that stretches beyond the boundaries of time: **“I am the Alpha and the Omega.”**

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. By using them, Jesus was declaring that He is the beginning and the end—the One who stands before creation and remains after the final chapter of history is written. He is the origin of all things and the conclusion toward which all things move. Nothing exists outside His knowledge, His authority, or His sustaining power.

This was not a new truth. Scripture had already revealed Jesus as the Creator of the universe:

- *“In the beginning was the Word... All things came into being through Him.”* (John 1:1–3)
- *“By Him all things were created... and in Him all things hold together.”* (Colossians 1:13–18)

But now, in Revelation, Jesus was unveiling the fullness of His eternal identity. He is not only the One who began creation—He is the One who will bring it to its rightful completion. He will reign in power and majesty for all eternity as the **King of Kings and Lord of Lords** (Revelation 19:1). Every kingdom will fall, every earthly power will fade, but His kingdom will stand forever.

For those who belong to Him—His sheep, His branches, His disciples—this truth is not merely theological. It is deeply personal. The One who holds the universe together also holds His people. The One who stands at the beginning and the end also stands beside us in every moment in between. His eternal nature becomes our eternal security.

John, who once leaned against Jesus' chest at the Last Supper, now saw Him in blazing glory. Yet the same Jesus who shone like the sun also placed His hand on John and said, "*Do not be afraid.*" The Alpha and the Omega is both infinitely powerful and intimately near.

Paul captures this cosmic and personal truth in his letter to the Colossians: "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*" — Colossians 1:15–17

## Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet: The "I AM" Statements of Jesus

1. When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He revealed His name as "\_\_\_\_\_." \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When Jesus said, "Before Abraham was born, I am," the religious leaders understood He was claiming to be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jesus declared, "I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of life," teaching that only He can satisfy the deepest hunger of the soul.
4. The people followed Jesus after the miracle of feeding the thousands because they wanted more \_\_\_\_\_, like the manna in the wilderness.
5. Jesus said, "I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world," promising that those who follow Him will not walk in darkness.
6. Even the smallest \_\_\_\_\_ can push back darkness, illustrating how Christ's presence overcomes spiritual darkness.
7. When Jesus said, "I am the door," He meant that He alone is the entrance to \_\_\_\_\_ and spiritual safety.
8. Jesus stands at the door and \_\_\_\_\_, waiting for each person to open their heart to Him.
9. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus said He "lays down His \_\_\_\_\_ for the sheep," showing His sacrificial love.
10. Jesus told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life," just before calling \_\_\_\_\_ out of the tomb after four days.
11. When Jesus said, "I am the vine," He taught that believers are the \_\_\_\_\_, completely dependent on Him for spiritual fruitfulness.
12. In Revelation, Jesus calls Himself "the Alpha and the Omega," meaning He is the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Answer Key**

1. *I AM WHO I AM*

2. *God*

3. *bread*

4. *signs* (or *miracles* — either is acceptable based on your lesson)

5. *Light*

6. *candle*

7. *salvation*

8. *knocks*

9. *life*

10. *Lazarus*

11. *branches*

12. *beginning / end*

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

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## **SG8                      The 'Beatitudes' of Jesus                      SG8**

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them....”

Matthew 5:1,2

After Jesus assembles His team of twelve disciples, He delivers a powerful discourse that Christian leaders have labelled the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (Matthew 5-7). The Lord starts His teaching by saying ‘Blessed are the ....’ eight times. These ‘Blessed’ statements have come to be known as the ‘Beatitudes.’ The Latin noun ‘beatitudo’ describes a state of being ‘blessed’ and the Greek word for ‘blessed’ is ‘makarioi’, meaning ‘happy,’ with the implication of having a quality of life of happiness.

At first glance, it may be possible to acknowledge how simple, beautiful, and ‘religious’ the Beatitudes appear to be. However, when a person attempts to put the principles they set forth into practice, there is one thing that soon becomes a realization – we (the natural man) would struggle enormously in attempting to fulfill them.

At face value, it also might be possible to completely misunderstand the message of the Beatitudes. To some, these proverb type statements might mean: poor people are very rich; sad people are doing great; weak people are actually strong; losers are the real winners.’

To understand them we must understand the mind of the Teacher. To do that, we need to have the ‘mind of Christ,” (1 Corinthians 2:16). The Beatitudes are not so much a list of guidelines to follow as they are a description of the kind of person who is living a ‘Christlike’ lifestyle. We are not meant to practice the Beatitudes – we are meant to become them, and that takes a lifetime of spiritual maturity. When we get to the point in our lives that we look at the ‘Beatitudes’ using a lens directed towards God – and not necessarily just toward the people around us, their meaning becomes more focused. In other words, ‘Blessed are the ..... towards God.’

Key points to consider:

- The Beatitudes: emphasis → being not doing
- The Beatitudes: meant to be → Godward not ‘man-ward’
- The Beatitudes: not based on rules → based on a Person
- The Beatitudes: impossible for us → possible with Christ

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” — Matthew 5:3**

To be *poor* in everyday life means lacking money, resources, or possessions. But Jesus is not speaking about financial poverty—He is speaking about the condition of the heart. To be ‘poor in spirit’ means recognizing that before a holy and perfect God, we bring nothing of spiritual value on our own. We are spiritually empty, unable to save ourselves, and completely dependent on God’s grace.

Scripture reminds us that salvation is never earned: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast,*” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Pride, stubbornness, and false confidence blind us to our true condition. But when we humbly admit our spiritual poverty, God opens the door of His kingdom to us.

Those who acknowledge their need for God become His children and heirs: “*you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’... and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ*” (Romans 8:15–17). The kingdom belongs to those who know they cannot enter it without God’s mercy.

**“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” — Matthew 5:4**

The word Jesus uses for *mourn* describes a grief so deep it cannot be hidden. While it can refer to mourning a death, Jesus is pointing to something even deeper—mourning over sin. This is the sorrow that comes when we finally see our sin the way God sees it: destructive, painful, and separating us from Him.

This kind of mourning is not hopeless despair. It is the sorrow that leads to repentance—a turning away from sin and a turning back to God. Psalm 30:4–5 reminds us that God responds to this kind of sorrow with compassion: “*Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones... For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.*”

Those who mourn their sin are not left in shame. God Himself comforts them with forgiveness, restoration, and renewed fellowship. Through the cross of Christ, comfort is not a possibility—it is a promise.

**“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” — Matthew 5:5**

Meekness is often misunderstood. It does **not** mean weakness, passiveness, or being easily pushed around. Moses—one of the strongest leaders in Scripture—was called meek. Jesus Himself described His own heart as “meek and lowly” (Matthew 11:29).

In ancient times, the word *meek* was used to describe a wild horse that had been trained. The strength was still there, but now it was strength under control. Meekness is a life marked by balance, gentleness, patience, and self-control. It is the opposite of impulsiveness, rage, or reckless decisions.

Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), meaning it is something God grows in us as we walk with Him. Those who live with this controlled, disciplined spirit will “inherit the earth”—a promise pointing to the future reign of Christ and the peace of God’s coming kingdom.

**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” — Matthew 5:6**

People hunger for many things—success, wealth, recognition, pleasure, or achievement. Yet even when they obtain these things, they often remain unsatisfied. Earthly rewards are temporary and cannot fill the deepest needs of the human soul.

Jesus speaks of a different hunger—a longing for righteousness, which means being “right with God.” This is a hunger for a clean heart, a transformed life, and a relationship with God that shapes everything we do.

Jesus calls Himself the “Living Water” (John 4:10) and the “Bread of Life” (John 6:35). Only He can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the human heart. God satisfies us because “*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him,*” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Those who seek God’s righteousness find peace, joy, purpose, and a satisfaction that is eternal—not temporary.

**“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” — Matthew 5:7**

Human nature tends toward selfishness. Even the word *sin* has “I” at the center. But mercy turns our eyes outward. The Greek word *eleemon* means “actively compassionate”—not just feeling pity, but taking action to help.

Jesus’ ministry was marked by compassion: “*He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick,*” (Matthew 14:14). He fed the hungry, touched the untouchable, and raised the dead. He did not merely talk about mercy—He lived it.

To be merciful means:

- forgiving others
- helping those in need
- showing kindness
- seeing pain and responding with love

This is only possible through the power of Christ working in us. Mercy is costly, but it reflects the heart of God. And the promise is clear: those who show mercy will receive mercy—from God now, and in eternity.

**“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” — Matthew 5:8**

Pure gold is refined by intense heat. The fire burns away impurities until only the gold remains. The Greek word *pur* means “fire,” reminding us that purity often comes through refining.

Hebrews 12:14 gives a sobering truth: “without holiness no one will see the Lord.” God sees our hearts—our thoughts, motives, desires, and intentions. On our own, our hearts are impure. But through Christ’s sacrifice, God sees us through the cleansing blood of Jesus (1 John 2:1–2).

To be pure in heart means living with honesty before God, confessing sin, and pursuing holiness daily. It means allowing God to refine us—removing envy, lust, hatred, pride, and anything that keeps us from Him. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,”* (1 John 1:9).

Those who pursue purity will “see God”—not only in eternity, but even now, as their hearts become more aligned with His.

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” — Matthew 5:9**

- *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”* — Romans 12:18
- *“Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance.”* — 2 Thessalonians 3:16
- *“Pursue peace with all men...”* — Hebrews 12:14

The world is deeply lacking in peace. Nations fight wars, families break apart, friendships collapse, and even churches experience conflict. Peace is not natural to the human heart; conflict is. Yet Jesus calls His followers to be peacemakers, not peace-avoiders or peace-wishers. A peacemaker is someone who steps into conflict with the goal of healing, restoring, and reconciling.

Peacemakers:

- end conflicts rather than fuel them
- mediate with the love and patience of Christ
- seek unity instead of division
- bring calm into chaos

A peacemaker is someone who carries the peace of God into places filled with strife. They are God’s “go-betweens,” helping settle quarrels and pointing people toward forgiveness and understanding.

Looking Godward, when we receive Christ, we receive peace with God: *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1).

But peace *with* God is not the same as the peace of God. The peace of God is the inner calm and confidence that comes from trusting Him. Only those who have peace within can bring peace to others.

The reward is profound: peacemakers “shall be called sons of God.” Jesus, the true Son of God, brought peace to a hostile world—and was rejected for it. Those who follow His example may also face rejection, but God Himself will honor them as His children.

**“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” — Matthew 5:10**

The Greek word for *persecuted*—*diōkō*—means “to drive away,” “to pursue in a hostile manner,” “to harass,” “to mistreat,” or “to trouble.” Persecution is not the goal of the Christian life, but it is often the result of living faithfully for Christ in a world that resists His truth.

This Beatitude does not bless those who suffer because of wrongdoing or foolish choices. It blesses those who suffer for righteousness’ sake—for doing what is right, for standing with Christ, and for living out the previous seven Beatitudes.

Jesus Himself experienced every form of rejection:

- misunderstood by His own family
- rejected by His hometown
- persecuted by religious leaders
- betrayed by a disciple
- condemned by the government
- falsely accused and mocked

If the perfect Son of God faced persecution, His followers should not be surprised when they face it as well.

Yet Jesus declares that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who endure suffering for His sake. God pours out blessings on those who remain faithful under pressure. Their suffering is not wasted—it is noticed, honored, and rewarded by God.

If you are shamed, ridiculed, or mistreated for standing up for Jesus, for holding to biblical doctrine, or for living a Christian lifestyle, God Himself will honor you in His kingdom. Persecution becomes a sign that you belong to Christ—and that your reward is great.

**“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.” — Matthew 5:11**

Jesus moves from general persecution (v.10) to something far more personal. He shifts from “those” to “you.” This Beatitude is no longer theoretical—it is directed straight at the disciple’s heart. Jesus prepares His followers for the reality that living for Him will sometimes bring insults, lies, and mistreatment.

Persecution can take many forms:

- verbal attacks
- false accusations
- rejection by friends or family
- being mocked for faith
- being misunderstood or misrepresented

Jesus makes it clear that the blessing is not for suffering in general, but for suffering “because of Me.” When people insult or mistreat a believer because they follow Christ, that believer is sharing in the same rejection Jesus Himself experienced.

This kind of persecution tests our faith, but it also reveals our identity. It shows that we belong to Christ and that His light is shining through us strongly enough to be noticed. Jesus does not minimize the pain of persecution, but He reframes it: what feels like loss on earth is actually gain in heaven.

**“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” — Matthew 5:12**

Jesus gives two commands that seem impossible in the face of suffering: rejoice and be glad. He is not telling His followers to enjoy pain or pretend persecution is pleasant. Instead, He is calling them to look beyond the moment and see the eternal reality behind it.

There are two reasons Jesus gives for rejoicing:

### **1. Your reward in heaven is great.**

God sees every insult, every act of faithfulness, every moment you stand for truth. Nothing is wasted. The world may shame you, but heaven honors you. The world may reject you, but God welcomes you. The world may take from you, but God stores up eternal reward.

### **2. You stand in the company of the prophets.**

The prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Elijah—were all persecuted for speaking God’s truth. When believers suffer for righteousness, they join the same line of faithful servants who refused to compromise. Persecution becomes a mark of spiritual heritage, not failure. This final Beatitude reminds us that following Christ is costly, but the cost is temporary. The reward is eternal. The world may oppose the people of God, but the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

## Fill-in-the-Blank Worksheet: The Beatitudes

1. To be poor in spirit means recognizing that we are spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ before a holy God.
2. According to Ephesians 2:8–9, we are saved by \_\_\_\_\_ through faith, not by works.
3. Those who mourn in Matthew 5:4 are grieving over their \_\_\_\_\_ and turning back to God in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jesus described Himself as “meek and \_\_\_\_\_ of heart,” showing that meekness is strength under \_\_\_\_\_.
5. People who hunger and thirst for \_\_\_\_\_ will be satisfied because only God can fill the deepest needs of the human heart.
6. Jesus calls Himself the “Living \_\_\_\_\_” (John 4:10) and the “Bread of \_\_\_\_\_” (John 6:35).
7. The Greek word for merciful, *eleemon*, means being actively \_\_\_\_\_ toward others.
8. Only those who have the peace of God within can act as \_\_\_\_\_ in a world filled with conflict.
9. Peacemakers will be called \_\_\_\_\_ of God because they reflect the character of Christ.
10. The Greek word for persecuted, *diōkō*, means to be mistreated, harassed, or \_\_\_\_\_ for righteousness’ sake.
11. Jesus teaches that when believers are insulted or falsely accused “because of Me,” they should \_\_\_\_\_ and be glad.
12. Jesus promises that those who suffer for righteousness have a great \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven.

## **Answer Key**

1. poor / empty / destitute

(Accept any of these since your lesson uses all three.)

2. grace

3. sin; repentance

4. lowly; control

5. righteousness

6. Water; Life

7. compassionate

8. peacemakers

9. sons

10. troubled (or pursued, harassed, mistreated — all acceptable from your definition)

11. rejoice

12. reward

# No Dark Clouds - Personal Application Lesson

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**PA#1**

**God Made You Unique**

**PA#1**

*On the ox cart this morning there are six children, all of whom have some type of physical deformity or disability. The oldest is Aditya. She is fourteen years old but is also one of the shortest. Aditya has metaphyseal dysplasia. Meaning she is under four feet tall, very similar to the size of a dwarf. Though she has short arms, tiny hands and very short legs, there is one God-given talent the teenage girl has – an amazing singing voice.*

*No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ, Chapter 1*

*..... With a confused and skeptical tone of voice, Beggar Boy asks, “Why are you so nice to me? You aren’t bothered by my face?” For a moment, Mishea looks into the eyes of the boy. This makes Beggar Boy feel very uncomfortable and he looks away. “Your face and your heart are two different things. I can’t see your heart by your face. And it is your heart that makes you – you! You are unique, and God loves you as a unique person. So, it is all right to be different.” “Yes, I have a lot of unically about me,” he boasts. “Unique. The word is – unique,” Mishea says. “Yeah, that’s what I mean, unique.”*

*Beggar Boy and Mishea, No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ, Chapter 5*

When Mishea tells Beggar Boy, “Your face and your heart are two different things,” what do you think she is trying to help him understand about where true identity comes from?

Aditya has a visible disability but also a remarkable gift. How does her story challenge the idea that physical differences make someone “less,” and what does it reveal about the way God designs each person?

Many people, at some point in their lives, wrestle with questions like *Who am I? Why don't I feel special? Why do others seem more talented, confident, or purposeful than I am?* These questions often rise quietly in the heart, especially when we compare ourselves to the people around us. It's easy to feel average or unnoticed, as if everyone else has something meaningful to offer while we fade into the background.

But Scripture tells a very different story about who you are and how God sees you. Your worth is not measured by comparison, popularity, or visible talent. It begins with a foundational truth: **you were created intentionally by God Himself.** You are not a random mix of traits or a mistake in the design. You carry a God-given identity that no one else can duplicate.

Psalms 139:16 teaches that every one of your days was written in God's book before any of them came to be. This is a mystery far beyond our understanding, yet it reveals something profound: **your life is not accidental.** God's involvement in your story began long before you were born, and His design for you remains purposeful even when you cannot see it clearly.

The Bible explains that human uniqueness originates in God's creative work. Genesis 1:27 tells us that humanity was formed in His image. This means every person reflects something of God's character and intention. Differences in appearance, personality, abilities, and experiences are not flaws—they are expressions of His creativity. No one is an accident, and no one is overlooked.

Scripture also points us toward the future God is preparing. Revelation 21:5 reminds us that one day, in the renewed creation, believers will fully live out the identity God intended from the beginning—without the distortions caused by sin, insecurity, or brokenness. Until that day comes, we can trust that God equips each person in unique ways for His purposes. The New Testament describes the body of Christ as a community where every member has a different function, and those differences are essential for unity and strength. Variation is not a deficit; it is part of God's design for how His people work together.

Still, feelings of inadequacy are real. Sometimes they come from how we see ourselves—comparing our weaknesses to someone else's strengths. Sometimes they come from cultural pressure, from not yet discovering our gifts, or from painful experiences like rejection, criticism, or bullying. God affirms the worth of every person, yet the effects of sin—the “curse of creation”—can cloud our sense of identity. Even so, God continues to redeem what is broken and restore what has been damaged.

Your uniqueness is not something you have to earn. It is something God has already woven into your being. As you learn to see yourself through His eyes, you begin to understand that your life carries meaning, purpose, and value that no one else can replace. God made you intentionally. God made you thoughtfully. **God made you unique.**

## Reflection

Take a moment to slow down and think honestly about how you see yourself. Many of us carry quiet doubts—feelings that we are not enough, not gifted enough, or not important enough. These thoughts can shape how we move through the world, even when we don't realize it. But God invites you to see yourself through His eyes, not through the lens of comparison or insecurity.

You were created with intention. Your personality, your strengths, your struggles, and even your story are part of a design that God has been shaping since before you were born. Instead of asking, “Why am I not like someone else?” consider asking, “What has God placed in me that reflects His creativity?” When you begin to recognize the unique ways God has formed you, you can live with greater confidence and purpose. You don’t have to compete with anyone else. You simply have to be faithful with the identity God has given you.

As you reflect, invite God to help you see the parts of yourself you may have overlooked or undervalued. Ask Him to heal the places where comparison or past wounds have distorted your sense of worth. God delights in who He made you to be, and He is patient as you learn to see yourself the same way.

### **Scripture Nuggets**

“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.” *Psalms 139:13–14*

“Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.” *Psalms 139:16*

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” *Jeremiah 1:5*

“So, God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” *Genesis 1:27*

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” *Ephesians 2:10*

“But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.” *Isaiah 64:8*

“For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly...” *Romans 12:4–6*

“Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” *Matthew 10:29–31*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. When you face self-doubt or wonder about your purpose, which Scripture Nugget speaks most clearly to you, and why?

2. If someone asked you, “Does God overlook me? Am I a mistake?” how would you respond?

### **Christ Restores Our True Identity**

When Jesus triumphed over sin on the cross, He broke the power of everything that distorts our sense of worth—comparison, insecurity, shame, and the effects of the curse. Through Christ, we are invited to live as the people God designed us to be.

“For the body is not one member, but many... But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” *1 Corinthians 12:14, 18*

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” *2 Corinthians 5:17*

“And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’” *Revelation 21:5*

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## PA#2

## Dealing with Fear and Anger

## PA#2

*Jesus gives the boy one last instruction. “You came here to run away from Jerusalem because you were deeply hurt. So much so, that you have made the decision to never trust anyone again. But running away is not the answer.”*

*“But they all failed me and didn’t keep any of their promises,” the boy blurts out. “In this life there is always going to be hurt and pain,” Jesus replies. “I came so that your hurt and pain can be placed on My shoulders. Let me carry the yoke.” “But how will I be able to forget?” the boy responds.*

*“Not forget – but forgive,” Jesus replies. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life. Love will always conquer hate, and forgiveness will be able to conquer fear and hurt.”*

*“I want to say I can do that with the Romans, but I will never forgive the man who gave me my scars,” replies the boy. “He is evil.”*

*“Someday, you will be face-to-face with this man once again,” Jesus says, “and you will have a decision to make – forgive him or hurt him.”*

*Processing this statement, and before responding, the boy looks at Jesus’ nail scars on His wrists once again. “If I am able to forgive him, it will only be because You forgave those who scarred You,” the boy says.*

*“Yes, indeed,” Jesus replies. “When you see him, you will remember My scars vividly.”* *No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ, Chapter 20*

When Jesus tells the boy, “Not forget – but forgive,” what do you think makes forgiveness feel harder than forgetting, especially when the wound is deep?

The boy says he could only forgive because Jesus forgave those who scarred Him. How does looking at Jesus’ response to His own suffering change the way you think about your fear, anger, or desire for justice?

Fear and anger are two of the strongest emotions we carry, and they often appear without warning. A sudden change in the future, a broken promise, a painful failure, an act of injustice, or the loss of something precious can stir them up before we even have time to think. These emotions can leave us feeling shaken, confused, or embarrassed, as if something inside us has slipped out of our control. In those moments, many people quietly wonder if God truly understands what they're feeling, or if He can help with emotions that feel this powerful.

Scripture gives us a place to begin. Romans 8:22 says that all creation “groans” under the weight of sin. That single word—*groans*—captures the ache we feel inside. It reminds us that our emotional struggles are part of a much larger story. We may not fully understand why fear and anger can grip us so tightly, but the Bible assures us that these experiences are not random or ignored by God.

Fear and uncontrolled anger were never part of God's original design. They entered the world when sin distorted everything in Genesis 3, including the way we feel and respond. Because of this, even people who love God deeply can experience anxiety, rage, or inner turmoil. These emotions do not mean someone is weak or faithless. They simply reveal what it means to live in a world that is not yet healed.

But God has never abandoned His creation to this brokenness. He promises a future where every tear will be wiped away, where pain and fear and emotional chaos will no longer exist. Revelation 21:4 gives us a glimpse of that day. It reminds us that our struggles, as heavy as they feel, are temporary. They will not follow us into eternity.

Until that day comes, God does not leave us to face our emotions alone. He gives His children the Holy Spirit, who brings peace, strength, and self-control right in the middle of the storm. Our different temperaments—whether calm, fiery, cautious, or bold—are not flaws. They are part of how God designed us, and each one becomes an opportunity to lean on His strength and grow in His character.

Fear often rises from our imagination, from a lack of trust, or from focusing on the worst possibilities. Anger can come from selfish desires, from old wounds that were never healed, or from forgetting to renew our minds with truth. Sometimes these emotions are stirred up by the actions of others—abuse, betrayal, provocation, or injustice. God does intervene, and He does calm storms, but the effects of sin still shape our emotional world. This curse has lingered throughout human history, yet Christ continues to redeem what sin has damaged.

Through all of this, God remains patient with us. He does not shame us for feeling afraid or angry. He invites us to bring those emotions to Him, honestly and without pretending. He teaches us how to walk through them, how to grow stronger because of them, and how to find peace even when life feels uncertain.

Fear and anger do not have to define us. They do not have to control our decisions or shape our identity. In Christ, we learn to breathe again, to trust again, and to live with a steadiness that does not come from our own strength. God meets us in the very places where our emotions feel the loudest, and He leads us toward a life marked by courage, peace, and hope.

## Scripture Nuggets

“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” *Isaiah 41:10*

“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”  
*2 Timothy 1:7*

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” *Psalms 23:4*

“Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” *Ephesians 4:26–27*

“Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for a man’s anger does not achieve the righteousness of God.” *James 1:19–20*

“Cease from anger and abandon wrath; Do not get upset; it leads only to evildoing.” *Psalms 37:8*

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” *Philippians 4:6–7*

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And one who rules his spirit, than one who captures a city.” *Proverbs 16:32*

## Reflection Questions

1. When fear rises or anger begins to build, which Scripture Nugget speaks most clearly to you, and why?

2. If someone asked you, “Why do I struggle so much? Does God care? Am I too broken?” how would you respond?

## **Christ's Victory Over Emotional Brokenness**

When Jesus carried our sins to the cross, He also carried the emotional distortions that came with the curse—fear that paralyzes, anger that destroys, and the inner storms that leave us shaken. Through Christ, we are not left to fight these battles alone. God empowers us to live with His peace and His self-control, even when our emotions feel overwhelming.

“Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful.” *John 14:27*

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” *Galatians 5:22–23*

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**PA#3**

**Handling Conflict with Others**

**PA#3**

*“If, - if I ask Him, do you think this Jesus from Nazareth can give me a new face?” Beggar Boy bravely asks. Silence falls in the room momentarily. Suddenly, a great laughter erupts, especially from Brutaes who grabs a shiny Roman shield and stands up. “You don’t need this Jesus to heal you. I can do it right here by smashing your face into place with this shield.” Tiberius gets up and pushes Brutaes. “Shut up Brutaes!”*

*Beggar Boy rises, grabs a stool, and runs toward Brutaes. Instead of running around the table, the boy jumps on it. “You fat drunkard, don’t you ever talk about my face like that again!” Brutaes raises the shiny shield toward the boy. “What are you going to do about it – liver face!!”*

*Brutaes picks up his mug of wine and hurls it toward the boy. Beggar Boy deflects the mug with the stool sending wine flying all over the room. The mug rolls to the door. There is a big scramble as everyone tries to hold back both Beggar Boy and Brutaes .....*

*(Beggar Boy) enters the granary. Being late at night, all is quiet, and no one is around ..... off to one side (in a corner of the room), is a large barrel of water. The boy walks to the barrel and with difficulty drags it to a closed door. He tilts the barrel on the door, carefully making sure no water spills. Certain that the barrel of water is properly balanced, the boy bangs on the door. There is no response. He bangs on the door a second time forcefully.*

*From inside the room, the boy hears the voice of Brutaes, “I’m coming! I’m coming! It’s the middle of the night already!” Beggar Boy sprints out of the granary and into the garrison courtyard. Hearing the sound of many gallons of water splashing behind him, the boy hears Brutaes screaming, “Auuugghhh!” “No one makes fun of my face – no one,” the boy tells himself. No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ, Chapter 9*

When Beggar Boy was mocked about his face, he reacted with anger and revenge. What do you think he was really trying to protect in that moment—his pride, his pain, or something deeper?

After Beggar Boy dumps the water on Brutaes, he tells himself, “*No one makes fun of my face—no one.*” How does that moment reveal the difference between defending yourself and letting hurt control your choices?

Conflict touches every life. It rises from misunderstandings, unmet expectations, jealousy, betrayal, gossip, unfair treatment, or old wounds that never fully healed. Sometimes it comes from our own pride or quick words. Sometimes it comes from someone else’s cruelty. In Beggar Boy’s case, the hurt was real—but the way he responded only deepened the damage. He chose revenge. But revenge never heals anything. It only adds another wound to the ones already there.

Revenge feels powerful in the moment. It promises satisfaction, justice, or control. But it never delivers what it promises. It cannot heal a wounded heart. It cannot restore dignity. It cannot undo the harm that was done. Instead, it traps us in the very pain we are trying to escape.

Beggar Boy believed that getting even would make him feel strong. Instead, it tied him more tightly to the shame he carried. Revenge always does that—it keeps the wound open.

God calls His people to something far more courageous: to break the cycle instead of feeding it.

When relationships fall apart, many people wonder if God notices. They ask, “*If God cares, why does everything still feel so broken?*” Scripture gives us a different picture of God’s heart.

Romans 3:23 reminds us that all people have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. That truth affects every relationship we have. Because of sin, even small disagreements can explode into something painful. Even people who love God can hurt each other. Conflict rises easily not because God is distant, but because our world is still marked by the effects of the fall.

From the very beginning, conflict was never part of God’s design. Before sin entered the world, relationships were marked by trust, honesty, and peace. But when sin came, it twisted the way we speak, listen, and treat one another. Pride, fear, selfishness, and insecurity began to shape human interactions. These forces still influence us today.

Yet God has not abandoned us to this brokenness. Scripture points us toward a future where all conflicts will end. Revelation 21:4 describes a day when God wipes away every tear, and pain, betrayal, and relational wounds will be no more. Peace will not just be possible—it will be permanent. That promise reminds us that the struggles we face now are not the final story.

Until that day comes, God equips His children with His Word and His Spirit so they can walk a different path. He teaches us how to respond with humility instead of pride, forgiveness instead of bitterness, and courage instead of revenge. He shows us how to repair what has been damaged rather than making the wound deeper.

God's way of handling conflict is not weak or passive. It requires strength, patience, and a willingness to trust Him with the outcome. His way invites us to slow down before reacting, to listen before assuming, and to speak truth without cruelty. It invites us to forgive—not because the other person deserves it, but because Christ has forgiven us.

This doesn't mean pretending the hurt didn't happen. It doesn't mean allowing abuse or injustice. It means refusing to let anger become our master. It means choosing peace over payback, healing over harm, and wisdom over impulse.

Christ Himself modeled this. When He was insulted, He did not insult back. When He was mistreated, He did not seek revenge. Instead, He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges justly. His example shows us that strength is not found in striking back, but in choosing a higher road.

Conflicts will still happen. People will still disappoint us. We will still say things we regret. But Christ is always working to redeem what sin has broken. He softens hearts. He restores relationships. He teaches us how to love even when it is difficult. And when we choose His way instead of revenge, we become part of His healing work in the world.

### **Scripture Nuggets**

“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”  
*Romans 14:19*

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.” *Romans 12:18*

“Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.” *Colossians 3:13*

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”  
*Ephesians 4:29*

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.” *Proverbs 15:1*

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” *James 5:16*

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” *Matthew 5:9*

“Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.” *Proverbs 10:12*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. When conflict rises or relational hurt lingers, which Scripture Nugget speaks most clearly to you, and why?

2. If someone asked you, “Why does this keep happening to me? Does God expect me to just take it? Am I too flawed to have peaceful relationships?” how would you respond?

### **Christ’s Path to Reconciliation**

When Jesus went to the cross, He didn’t just reconcile us to God—He also showed us the path to reconciling with others. His humility, sacrifice, and forgiveness reveal what true restoration looks like. Through Christ, we are empowered to break cycles of conflict, to seek peace, and to rebuild what has been damaged.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Romans 5:1*

“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.” *Ephesians 2:14*

### **Discussion Questions**

When Beggar Boy was mocked, he reacted with anger and revenge. Why do you think revenge can feel so tempting when we’re hurt, even though it never truly helps?

Think about a time when someone’s words or actions wounded you. What emotions rose up first, and how might God invite you to respond differently than your first impulse?

Conflict often reveals something deeper happening in our hearts—fear, pride, insecurity, or old wounds. What do you think Beggar Boy’s reaction shows about the pain he carries inside?

Jesus teaches us to pursue peace, forgiveness, and courage instead of payback. What might it look like, in your own relationships, to choose God’s way of handling conflict rather than the world’s way?

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**PA#4**

## **When Really Bad Things Happen**

**PA#4**

*“Who am I? Why am I not normal like the kids you teach? They have a home, a family, and no scars.”*

*Before answering, Mishea silently moves one of her hands back and forth in the water of the pool. Finally, she looks up and addresses the boy. “First of all, you need to be honest with yourself. You are not the son of Leonidas. Do you remember anything about your real parents?”*

*Wiping away the tears from his face, the boy responds, “I was told that I was sold as a slave and that my parents were slaves. All I really know is that I was raised with beggars and crippled kids. I escaped one night from the caretakers and I have been on my own now for a long time. My only real friends are Aditya, Scooter, and Baa-Foo.”*

*“Second of all,” Mishea continues, “you must confront the fact that what has already happened cannot be changed. You can only change the present and the future.”*

*“But why did this happen to me?” the boy asks sincerely. “Does God hate me? Is He punishing me?”*

*“I believe that the Hebrew God is the true and Almighty One God. You cannot see Him, but He can see you. You may feel that no one loves you or cares about you in this world – but He loves you and knows who you are. We may not understand why things happen the way they do, but He is the all-knowing God.”*

*Beggar Boy and Mishea, No Dark Clouds, Chapter 10*

When Beggar Boy asks, “*Why did this happen to me? Does God hate me?*”, what do you think he is really afraid of losing—his identity, his worth, or his hope?

Mishea tells him, “*You can only change the present and the future.*” How does that challenge the way you think about your own painful experiences—especially the ones you wish you could erase or rewrite?

Life can change in an instant. A tornado can destroy a neighborhood. A doctor can speak the word *cancer*. A loved one can die without warning. A car accident, a financial collapse, or a sudden tragedy can shake a person to the core. When these things happen, it is natural for people to ask hard questions. Some may even say, “Why would God let this happen?” or “Is God to blame for this?”

These questions come from real pain, and they deserve honest, compassionate answers.

According to 2 Thessalonians 2:7, iniquity—evil, sin, tragedy, and lawlessness—is described as a mystery. This means we will never fully understand every reason behind the suffering we see in the world. But Scripture does give us several truths we can rely on.

First, **evil does not come from God**, nor can we blame Him for the brokenness we experience. Evil entered the world when Satan deceived Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Their disobedience—what we call original sin—opened the door for chaos, pain, and death to spread through creation. Romans 8:19–22 explains that all of creation has been groaning ever since, longing for the day when God will restore everything. Because of this brokenness, diseases, natural disasters, and tragedies can happen to anyone, even faithful believers.

Second, Scripture assures us that **evil will not last forever**. Matthew 25:41 tells us that one day God will banish evil completely, casting it into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The suffering we see now is temporary, even though it feels overwhelming in the moment.

Third, until that final day comes, **God promises to be with His people**. He does not leave us alone in tragedy. He walks with us through disaster, grief, and loss. His presence does not always remove the pain, but it gives strength, comfort, and hope in the middle of it.

It is also important to remember that not all suffering is the same. Sometimes bad things happen because of our own choices. If we touch a hot stove, the burn is not God’s fault. Sometimes suffering comes from what we fail to do—like ignoring wisdom or refusing to act. And sometimes pain comes from the choices of others, such as a drunk driver causing a terrible accident.

God does intervene at times and prevents harm we never even knew was coming. But because of original sin—the “curse of creation”—we still live in a world where tragedy exists. This curse has affected humanity since the beginning of time.

Even so, God continues to work in the middle of suffering. He brings healing, growth, and hope out of situations that seem impossible. The Scriptures below remind us of His promises and His heart toward us.

## Reflection

Take a moment to think about the hardest experiences you have faced or witnessed. Pain has a way of making life feel confusing and unfair. When tragedy strikes, it is normal to feel overwhelmed, frightened, or even angry. Many people wonder why God allowed something so terrible to happen, or whether He is distant or uncaring. These questions do not make you weak—they make you human.

But Scripture invites us to look deeper. The Bible teaches that suffering exists because the world is broken, not because God enjoys watching people hurt. God grieves with us, walks with us, and promises that pain will not have the final word. Even when we cannot understand the “why,” we can trust the “Who”—the God who stays close to the brokenhearted and works in ways we cannot always see.

As you reflect, consider how God has met you in difficult moments. Think about the people He placed in your life, the strength you didn’t know you had, or the hope that helped you keep going. God does not promise a life without hardship, but He does promise His presence, His comfort, and His future restoration. Your suffering is not meaningless, and you are never alone in it.

### **Scripture Nuggets**

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” — Romans 8:28

“Tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope...” — Romans 5:3–5

“‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD... ‘to give you a future and a hope.’” — Jeremiah 29:11

“Consider it all joy... when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” — James 1:2–3

“He will wipe away every tear... there will no longer be any death... or pain...” — Revelation 21:4

“The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory... to be revealed...” — Romans 8:18

“Delight yourself in the LORD... Commit your way to the LORD... and He will do it.” — Psalm 37:4–5

### **Reflection Question:**

In times of great tragedy or deep difficulty, which of these Scripture Nuggets could bring comfort to your heart? Explain why that particular verse speaks to you.

## **Responding to the Question: “Why Did This Happen to Me?”**

Imagine a young boy looking up with tears in his eyes, asking, “Does God hate me? Is He punishing me?” These are not small questions. They come from a place of fear and confusion.

If you were speaking to Beggar Boy, you might gently explain that God does not hate him. God is not looking for reasons to punish him. The brokenness of the world is the result of sin—not his personal failure, but the curse that has affected all creation since the fall. You could remind him that Jesus understands suffering because He experienced it Himself. And you could assure him that God loves him deeply and is near to those who are hurting.

## **The Hope of the Cross**

When Jesus went to the cross, He carried the full weight of sin and its consequences. He took on every part of the curse—sickness, pain, suffering, and tragedy. Through His death and resurrection, He opened the way for us to be free from the curse of creation.

- *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law...”* — Galatians 3:13
- *“I have been crucified with Christ... Christ lives in me...”* — Galatians 2:20
- *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...”* — Revelation 21:1

Because of Christ, suffering does not have the final word. Pain is temporary. Hope is eternal. And one day, God will restore everything that has been broken.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think people often blame God when tragedy strikes?
2. How does understanding the origin of sin and brokenness help explain why bad things happen? Which Scripture Nugget speaks most clearly to you during times of pain or confusion, and why?
3. What does it mean that evil is a “mystery,” and how does that shape the way we respond to suffering?
4. How would you comfort someone who believes God is punishing them because something bad happened?
5. In what ways have you seen God bring good out of a difficult or painful situation?
6. How does the promise of a future without suffering (Revelation 21:4) change the way we view present struggles?
7. What practical steps can a believer take to trust God when life feels out of control or unfair?

# No Dark Clouds - Personal Application Lesson

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**PA#5**

**What You Say Matters**

**PA#5**

*Suddenly, Jesus speaks. “Father, forgive them. They do not know what they do.” Caleb, struggling to breathe on his own cross, turns when he hears this and looks at Jesus. Momentarily, the soldiers at the rock stop and briefly look, then go back to their game. Bystanders mock Jesus for saying this.*

*Holding his hands upward toward heaven, Levi said, “If He saved others then why doesn’t He save Himself and come down off the cross!” “Ha! You who were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days; save yourself and come down,” Ezra adds. Sarcastically, Reuben comments, “Yes! Come down so that we may see that You are the Christ – and then we will believe in You!”*

*Many in the crowd (and some of the soldiers) sneer at these comments and make fun of Jesus. The criminal on Jesus’ left turns towards the Lord and mentions, “If You are really from God, then save Yourself and us as well.”*

*Upon hearing this, Caleb quickly responds earnestly to the other criminal. “Even now you have no dignity! We deserve our penalty, but this Man has done nothing worthy of death.” Caleb looks at Jesus and says, “Jesus – remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”*

*Jesus, who was looking down to the ground, looks toward Caleb and says, “You will be in paradise this day with Me.” No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ, Chapter 15*

When the crowd mocked Jesus and the soldiers sneered, their words revealed what was happening inside their hearts. What do you think Caleb’s words - “*We deserve our penalty, but this Man has done nothing worthy of death*”- show about the change happening inside him?

Jesus’ words, “*Father, forgive them,*” were spoken in the middle of pain and injustice. How does His response challenge the way you think about your own words when you’re hurt, angry, or misunderstood?

There are moments when a person sits alone after a hard conversation and wonders, “*Why did I say that? Why do my words seem to cut when I never meant them to?*” It can feel confusing and discouraging when speech becomes a source of regret. Words seem so small when they leave our mouths, yet they can land with surprising force. A joke meant to be funny, a comment said too quickly, a burst of anger, a careless exaggeration, or even silence at the wrong moment—any of these can leave someone wounded.

Many people carry the quiet fear that something is wrong with them because their words don’t come out the way they wish they would. They look at others who seem calm, wise, or gentle and wonder why their own speech feels so unpredictable. But Scripture understands this struggle. James describes the tongue as tiny but powerful, capable of setting a whole forest ablaze. It’s a startling image, yet it rings true. A single sentence can change the atmosphere of a room, shift a relationship, or echo in someone’s heart long after the moment has passed.

What’s comforting is that harmful speech was never part of God’s original design. In the beginning, words were meant to bless, to name, to create connection. It wasn’t until the fall—when deceit and pride entered the human heart—that words began to twist and wound. Even now, believers still feel the pull of those old patterns. It doesn’t mean God has stepped away. It simply means we are still being shaped, still learning how to speak from a heart being renewed.

And there is hope woven into the story. Scripture points toward a future where every word will be whole and clean again. Revelation describes a world where sorrow and brokenness fade, and our speech reflects only truth, praise, and love. Imagine a life where no one fears being misunderstood, where no one braces for a harsh comment, where every conversation feels safe. That day is coming, and it reminds us that our struggle with words is temporary.

Until then, God has not left us to wrestle alone. The Holy Spirit works quietly and faithfully within us, softening sharp edges, calming reactions, and teaching us to pause before we speak. Over time, our words begin to sound different—not perfect, but more patient, more thoughtful, more like the heart of Christ.

Harmful speech rarely comes from nowhere. It often rises from impatience, insecurity, or the need to be right. Sometimes it grows out of old wounds or unhealed anger. Sometimes it’s simply the result of living in a culture where sarcasm and criticism are treated as normal. And sometimes it’s triggered by the words of others, catching us off guard before we have time to think.

Even so, Christ keeps redeeming what sin has damaged. He doesn’t just forgive the words we regret—He gently works on the places inside us that produced them. He teaches us a new way to speak, one shaped by grace rather than impulse. And little by little, our words begin to carry healing instead of harm.

### **Scripture Nuggets**

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”  
*Ephesians 4:29*

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.” *Proverbs 15:1*

“The tongue of the wise brings healing... There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.” *Proverbs 12:18*

“Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” *Colossians 4:6*

“Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue Keeps his soul from troubles.” *Proverbs 21:23*

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”  
*Proverbs 18:21*

“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.” *Psalms 141:3*

“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.” *Proverbs 15:28*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. When you feel tempted to speak harshly, gossip, or stay silent out of fear, which Scripture Nugget speaks most clearly to you, and why?

2. If someone asked you, “Why do I keep failing at this? Does God give up on people who can’t control their tongue? Am I beyond help?” how would you respond?

### **Christ Redeems Our Words**

When Jesus went to the cross, He carried the weight of every sinful word ever spoken—every lie, every insult, every careless remark. Through His sacrifice, He opened the way for our speech to be redeemed and renewed. God, through Christ and the indwelling Spirit, empowers us to speak words that bring life instead of harm.

“But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison... With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men... My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.” *James 3:8–10*

“And the tongue is a fire... But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” *James 3:6, 17*

### **Discussion Questions**

When you think back on moments where your words caused hurt, what was happening inside you at the time—fear, frustration, insecurity, pressure—and how might understanding that help you grow?

What kinds of words from others have shaped you the most, either positively or negatively, and how does that influence the way you want to speak to people now?

# No Dark Clouds - Personal Application Lesson

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**PA#6**

## **Building Your Reputation**

**PA#6**

*“Very adamantly Leonidas speaks to Darius. “How in the name of dignity could any Roman – not just a Roman – but a Roman centurion bow to a Jew!”*

*“He speaks words of truth, power, and authority. He is a godly man.”*

*Somewhat angry, Leonidas replies, “He’s a Jew, and considers you a pagan dog.”*

*“What’s more important, saving the life of Favian or my pride?”*

*Leonidas questions, “The stablemaster is on the verge of death. If our physicians could not heal him what makes you think this man can heal him?”*

*“Barabbas has a reputation as a thief and a murderer. Pilate as a tough ruler. Your reputation, Leonidas, is that of a great warrior and leader of men. And the Nazarene – He makes the blind see, the crippled walk, and the lepers cleansed,” said Darius.*

*Leonidas abruptly stops. For a moment, the soldiers briefly look at each other. Then without saying anything further, they proceed down the road.”*

*..... The Roman patrol ..... heads toward the Roman garrison. When the soldiers reach it, they dismount and start to take their horses to the stables. Cleopas and another stable hand approach the soldiers hastily.*

*“Master Darius, Master Darius, it’s Favian,” remarks Cleopas. “He’s well, sir. Suddenly, it’s the Favian of old. He got up. Earlier this afternoon, he just got up!” remarks the other.*

*“I don’t believe it,” Julian says.*

*Darius and Leonidas look at each other without speaking. Turning back toward the stable-hands, Darius questions, “And where is the stablemaster now?”*

*“There - sir, he is coming this way,” Cleopas points toward the servant’s quarters. Favian approaches the returning patrol walking in his own strength and looking very healthy.*

*Darius looks at Leonidas and says, “Reputations, Leonidas. Reputations do matter.”*

*Darius and Leonidas, No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ, Chapter 5*

When Darius asks, “*What’s more important, saving the life of Favian or my pride?*”, what does this reveal about the kind of reputation he wants to have—and how does it contrast with Leonidas’ concern about status and appearance?

Darius lists the reputations of Barabbas, Pilate, Leonidas, and Jesus. How does this moment show that a person’s reputation is built over time through consistent actions, and what does it make you think about the kind of “name” you are building right now?

Many people know the sting of being judged too quickly. Sometimes it happens because of a single mistake. Other times it grows from a season of poor choices, a moment of weakness, or a past we wish we could rewrite. Even after we’ve changed, people may still see us through the shadows of who we used to be. Reputation is delicate, and once it cracks, it can feel as if it will never be whole again.

Some begin to believe a painful lie: “*God can’t redeem my reputation. My past defines me forever.*” But Scripture tells a different story—one filled with hope, restoration, and the promise that God is far more committed to our future than our failures. Proverbs reminds us how deeply God values character: “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.” (*Proverbs 22:1*)

This isn’t meant to pressure us into perfection; it reveals God’s heart for the kind of people we are becoming. He cares about the way we reflect His character in a world that watches closely.

A broken reputation was never part of God’s original design. Before sin entered the world, human relationships were marked by trust, honesty, and transparency. But in Genesis 3, the fall introduced fear, deceit, and self-protection. These distortions still shape how we act and how others perceive us. Even believers—people who love God—can struggle with inconsistency or impulsive choices. Not because God has abandoned them, but because sin still influences human character and relationships. Yet Scripture also points us toward a future where our story is fully redeemed.

Proverbs offers this steady encouragement: “He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.” (*Proverbs 10:9*)

Every act of honesty, every moment of repentance, every quiet decision to do what is right becomes part of the slow, steady rebuilding of a trustworthy name.

A damaged reputation can come from many places. Sometimes it grows from repeated choices that hurt others. Sometimes it forms because we refuse to repent or make things right. Other times it develops because we live inconsistently—acting one way in public and another in private. And sometimes it has nothing to do with our actions at all. People may judge unfairly, hold onto old stories, or refuse to forgive. God does intervene. He softens hearts, opens eyes, and restores what sin has damaged. But trust is still something that grows slowly, like a seed that must be watered over time.

Even so, Christ continues to redeem, reshape, and rebuild what once seemed broken beyond repair. He is not intimidated by your past. He is not limited by your reputation. He is committed to forming a new name within you—one marked by grace, truth, and steady transformation.

Jesus Himself calls us to live in a way that reflects His goodness: “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (*Matthew 5:16*)

And Paul reminds us that our work, our choices, and our character are ultimately for the Lord: “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men... It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.” (*Colossians 3:23–24*)

Integrity becomes the guiding force that shapes a renewed reputation: “The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.” (*Proverbs 11:3*)

And God calls His people to live with discernment, wisdom, and moral clarity: “Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.” (*Ezekiel 44:23*)

Paul echoes this same call to character when he writes: “In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.” (*Titus 2:7–8*)

## **Reflection Questions**

1. Which of the above mentioned Scripture Nuggets encourages you most when you think about rebuilding trust or shaping how others see you?

2. How would you gently respond to someone who feels stuck in their past and wonders if God can still use them?

## **Christ Restores Your Name**

When Jesus carried our sins to the cross, He also carried the shame attached to them—every lie, every broken promise, every moment that damaged our reputation. Through His sacrifice, He opened the way for our character to be restored and renewed. God, through Christ, transforms us into people of honor, not for our glory, but for His.

Your past may explain where you've been, but it does not define where God is taking you. In Christ, your name is not ruined—it is redeemed.

### **Discussion Questions**

Think about a time when someone misjudged you or held onto an old version of you. How did that experience shape the way you view reputation, forgiveness, or personal growth?

What does “walking in integrity” look like in your daily life right now? Are there small, practical steps you sense God inviting you to take?

How does knowing that Christ is not intimidated by your past change the way you approach rebuilding trust with others?

When you think about your “name” before God—your identity, your character, your story—what do you hope He continues to shape or redeem in the season ahead?

Tenth Plague/Passover	Exodus Chapters 11-13
The Beatitudes	Matt 5:3-12
Jesus heals the servant	Matt 8:5-13 Luke 7:1-17
Jesus heals paralyzed man	Matt 9:1-8 Mark 2:1-12 Luke 5:17-26
Jesus blesses the children	Matt 19:13-15 Mark 10:13-16 Luke 18:15-17
Jesus heals young blind man	John 8:12-19; Chapter 9
Upper Room (Last) Supper	Matt 26:20-29 Mark 14:17-25 Luke 22:14-23 John 13:18-30
Washing Disciple's feet	Luke 22:7-18,24 John 13:1-17
Jesus and Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1-10
Cleansing the Temple	Matt 21:12-16,23-46 Mark 11:15-19,27-33; 12:1-12 Luke 19:45-48; 20:1-19
Garden of Gethsemane	Matt 26:36-56 Mark 14:32-50 Luke 22:39-53 John 18:1-12
Jesus before Pilate	Matt 27:2 Mark 15:1-20 Lk 23:1-25 Jn 18:28-40; 19:1-16
Jesus before Herod Antipas	Luke 23:7-15
Mishea reading prophecy	Isaiah Ch. 53
Crucifixion	Matt 27:31-53 Mark 15:20-38 Lk 23:26-46 John 19:16-30
The Resurrection	Matt 28:1-4,11-15 Mark 16:1-8 Luke 24:1-12 John 20:1-18
Emmaus Road	Luke 24:13-33
Jesus appears to Thomas	Luke 24:33-48 John 20:19-29
Jesus – Sea of Galilee	John 21:1-22
Ascension of Jesus	Luke 24:50-53 Acts 1:8-12

Match the following 'life-lesson' themes from the novel with the corresponding chapter. Some themes/messages will be on more than one book chapter.

God Made You  
Unique

---

Yahweh  
Rapha

---

Judge Someone  
From Within

---

Honor Him and  
He will Honor You

---

Your Words  
Mean Things

---

True Love  
can Conquer  
Darkness

---

No Goodbyes to  
be Said in Heaven

---

He will Return  
Just as He said

---

You have  
God-given Gifts

---

Reputations  
Matter

---

Running Away from  
Your problems are  
Not the Answer

---

You can only  
Change the Present  
And the Future

---

Jesus  
Lives

---

God  
Remembers

---

# No Dark Clouds: A Tale of the Christ Evangel-Topic Cards

## Evangel-Topic #1

We reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read about a group of beggars in Biblical Jerusalem who were begging for money. But all of the money was turned over to a cruel teskmaster. He kept all of their earnings. Do you think that could really happen?

## Evangel-Topic #2

We reading a novel in my class at school. Today one of the characters was reading about Jesus from the Bible to a beggar boy. But the passage she read was written 700 years before His time. Wht do you think about that?

## Evangel-Topic #3

We reading a novel in my class at school. Today a young blind, mute boy passes away. An angel comes into the room and escorts the boy to enter heaven. A woman is waiting for the boy to enter heaven and it is his mother. Do you think it really happens that way?

## Evangel-Topic #4

We reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read about an elderly woman who approaches a beggar boy in the street. It turns out that this elderly person is actually an angel from heaven. Hebrews 13:2 twlls us that we may encounter angels without even knowing it. Do you think that is really possible?

## Evangel-Topic #5

Today we read in our novel about Pilate, a Roman leader who placed his hands on Jesus' shoulders and blood gets on his hands. Later, everytime the Roman washed his hands, he was telling everyone that the blood was not washing off. Do you think that really happened?

## Evangel-Topic #6

Today we read in our novel, that when Jesus died, the characters who were there saw a fissure break apart a large rock and the fissure went down to Jerusalem all the way to the Jewish Temple, then ripped apart a curtain called the Veil. What do you think the significance of that is?

## Evangel-Topic #7

Today we read in our novel about Roman soldiers and Jewish leaders arguing inside the empty tomb of Jesus. They seemed to be very afraid. The priests offered the soldiers money to be silent. Why do you think everyone was very afraid?

## Evangel-Topic #8

Today we read in our novel about the main characters watching Jesus ascend into Heaven. They saw angels, a large city in the sky and Jesus disappering with the angels in a cloud. Then 2 angels said that he would come back just as He left. When do you think that will take place?

# Scripture Nuggets

Scripture(s):	SG#	or	PA#
---------------	-----	----	-----

Key Concepts / Themes	
Commands To Obey	
Promises To Claim	
Actions To Take	
Things To Avoid	
Sins To Rebuke	
Chronology/ Historical Context	
Summary / Reflection / Notes:	

Scripture(s):	SG#	or	PA#
---------------	-----	----	-----

Key Concepts / Themes	
Commands To Obey	
Promises To Claim	
Actions To Take	
Things To Avoid	
Sins To Rebuke	
Chronology/ Historical Context	
Summary / Reflection / Notes:	

Summary / Reflection / Notes:
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Summary / Reflection / Notes:
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# Persanotes

# Fictional Characters

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The purpose of Persanotes are for the readers to compile character information on each respective character

## Mishea

## Darius

## Leonidas

Tiberius

Elderly Caravan Woman

Amos

Favian

Brutaes

Chloe

# Persanotes

# The Begging Children

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The novel follows the lives of seven begging children. The purpose of Persanotes are for the reader to compile information on each respective character and write any personal reflections you may have.

## Beggar Boy

## Rebekah

## Aditya

Baa-Foo

Scooter

Figs

The Infant

# Personal Reading Journal

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Scene/Chapter Plot Summary:

Scene/Chapter Plot Summary:

(circle one)

I really liked.....

I disliked .....

(circle one)

I really liked.....

I disliked .....

Reaction(s) /Reflection(s):

Reaction(s) /Reflection(s):

Discussion Question for the class/group:

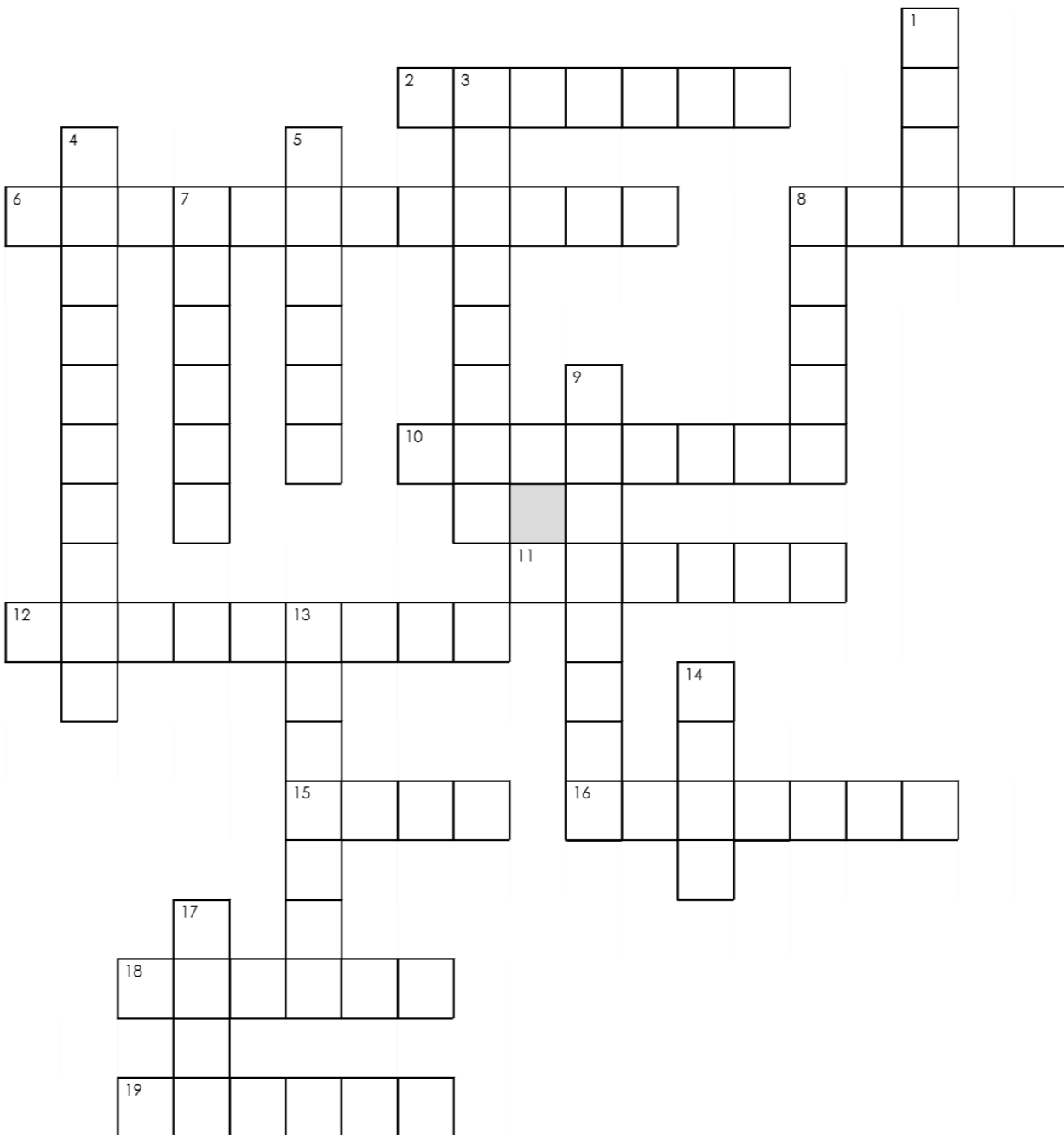
Discussion Question for the class/group:

I predict the following will happen:

I predict the following will happen:

# No Dark Clouds Crossword Puzzle: Characters

SCOOTER JESUS DARIUS CAIAPHAS BAAFOO CARAVANWOMAN PILATE REBEKAH RASTUS AMOS  
LEONIDAS JUDAS EZRA ADITYA FIGS TASKMASTER CLEOPAS BEGGARBOY MISHEA BARABBAS



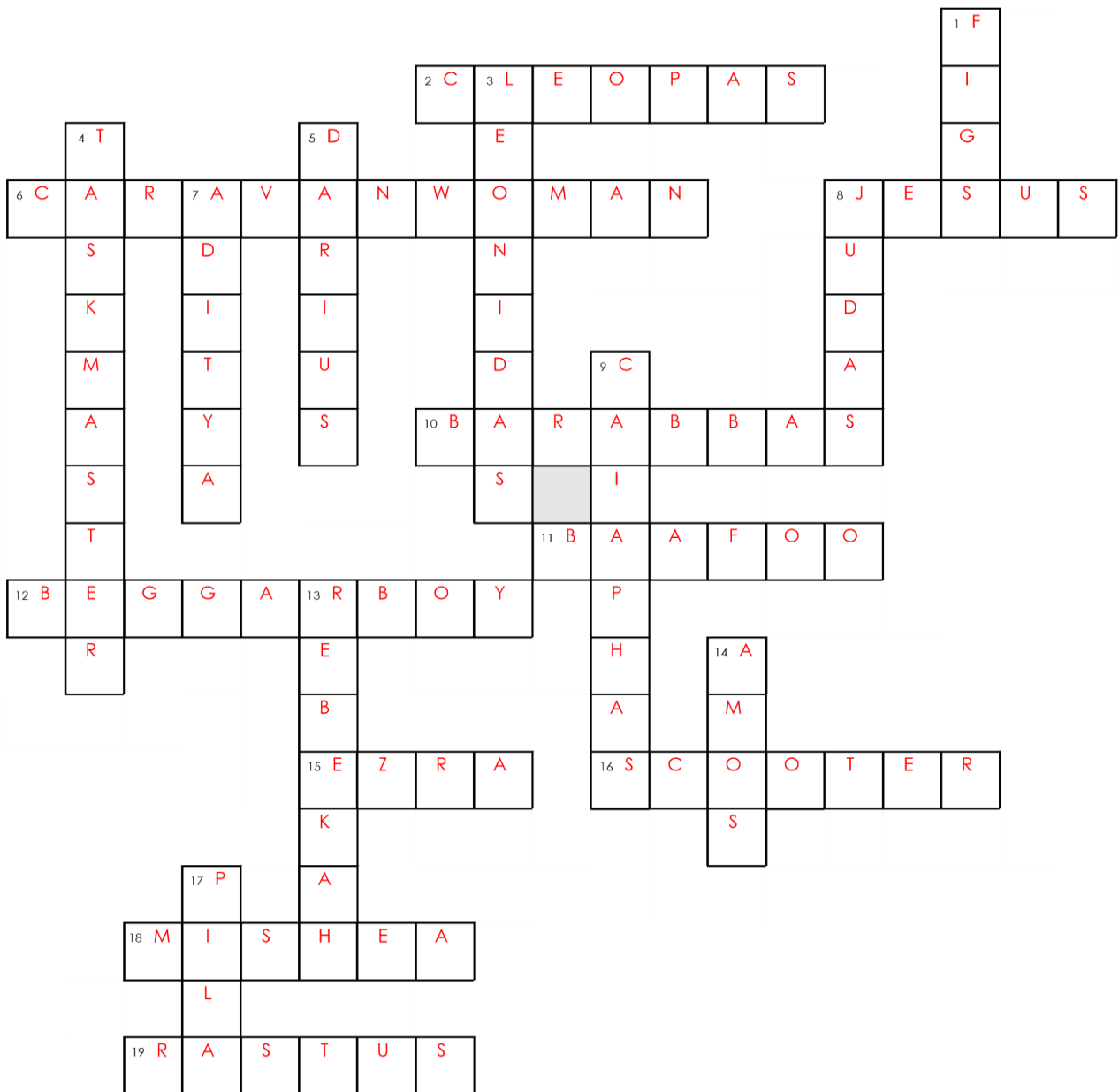
## ACROSS

2. Jewish stable hand at the Roman fortress
6. Older woman who gives the boy an acorn
8. Healer from Nazareth central to the story
10. Leader of the zealots
11. Deaf six-year-old girl
12. Ten-year-old scar-faced street boy
15. Pharisee upset by Jesus forgiving sins
16. Nine-year-old boy crippled in both legs
18. Ethiopian tutor in Pilate's household
19. Roman soldier who chases the boy

## DOWN

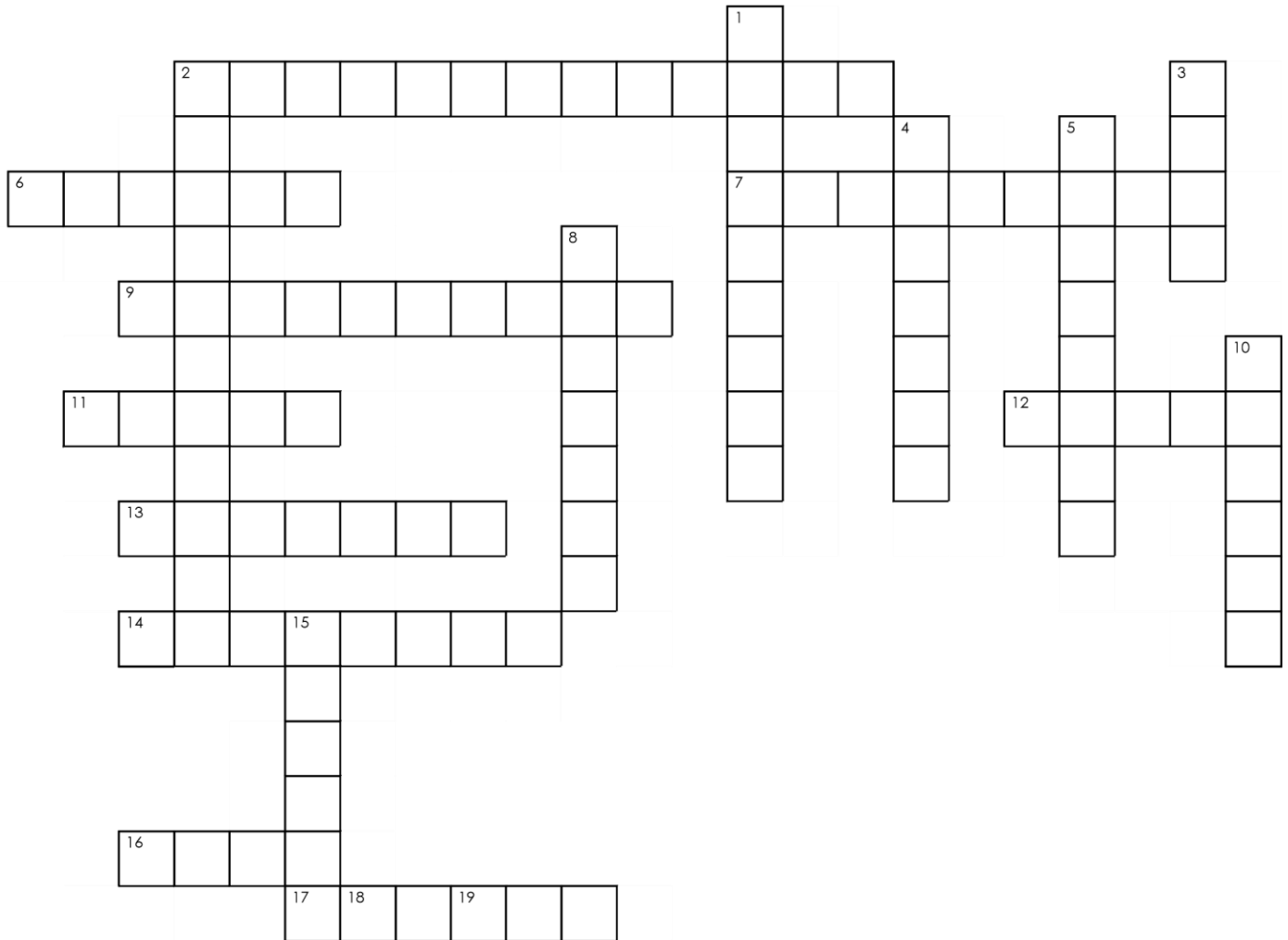
1. Blind, mute, and weak four-year-old boy
3. Praetorian centurion and ranking officer
4. Cruel man who has disabled children
5. Younger Roman centurion
7. Short teenage girl with an amazing singing
8. Disciple who is the treasurer
9. High Priest who plots against Jesus
13. Beautiful ten-year-old girl with one arm
14. Basket weaver
17. Roman Governor of Judea

# Crossword Puzzle: Characters - Solutions



# No Dark Clouds Crossword Puzzle: Locations & Places

CALVARY QUARRY ALLEY TOMB JOPPA GETHSAMANE JERUSALEM PALACE GENTILES STABLE HILL  
ANTONIA ESTATE GALILEE UPPERROOM FOUNTAIN MARKETPLACE TEMPLE BETHANY MEDITERRANEAN



## ACROSS

2. The body of water the centurion crosses
6. Where Barabbas and the zealots hide
7. Where the Last Supper takes place
9. The garden where Jesus is betrayed
11. The port city on the Israeli coast
12. The place of execution outside the city
13. The Sea of \_\_\_\_\_ where Jesus eats fish
14. The Courtyard of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the Temple
16. Outside the city overlooking Calvary
17. The Roman Governor's residence

## DOWN

1. The holy city
2. The area wher the children beg
3. The empty \_\_\_\_\_ where the cenrurion kneels
4. Jesus heals the paralyzed man here
5. The large circular feature in the plaza
8. The Roman fortress in Jerusalem
10. Where King Herod lived
15. The Jewish holy site that Jesus cleanses
18. Where the begging children sleep at night
19. Where Beggar Boy has his secret home



# No Dark Clouds Word Search: Characters

A D L M F H P G Q S B V Y O S K V O  
M D E C A H N V O C R U H K L S S Z  
O O O L V H H G C O U Y J E S U S C  
S W N A I E M S A O T Z A F P W T Z  
F M I U A R A F L T A Q C I I M I R  
R H D D N O R E E E E U G G A I B E  
N A A I E D Y O B R S M J S O S E B  
X H S A Y U B E G G A R B O Y H R E  
G D M R D A R I U S X Q U K D E I K  
C U F X B N B A R A B B A S L A U A  
E H Y K J H J B A A F O O F A C S H  
C W D W A D I T Y A O P I L A T E E

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → and ↓ and ↘

BEGGARBOY  
LEONIDAS  
BARABBAS  
TIBERIUS  
REBEKAH  
SCOOTER  
BRUTAES

CLAUDIA  
MISHEA  
ADITYA  
BAAFOO  
DARIUS  
PILATE  
FAVIAN

JESUS  
HEROD  
CALEB  
FIGS  
AMOS  
MARY

# No Dark Clouds Word Search: Places & Locations

J F E D B M L G N J Q A G Y O  
E G O L B I L N O S I R P E Q  
R U A I B N I A T N U O F L H  
U P G L B A H E O H K A H L P  
S E G M I M T T K L L M K A E  
A Y O E C L N S Y R A V L A C  
L T Y K T A E X U P C Y S U A  
E A R S O H Y E A N L K D P L  
M K T K P C S L Z G S S W P P  
Y Y R C V E A A X X A Q M E T  
N R A R L C Z P M T V T L R E  
H P R P E B E T H A N Y E R K  
V M M A F S E L I T N E G O R  
C E X I U D J O P P A E O O A  
T D B E B Q G E S T A T E M M

ALLEY  
CALVARY  
GALILEE  
GETHSAMANE  
JOPPA  
PRISON  
TEMPLE

ANTONIA  
ESTATE  
GATE  
HILL  
MARKETPLACE  
QUARRY  
TOMB

BETHANY  
FOUNTAIN  
GENTILES  
JERUSALEM  
PALACE  
STABLE  
UPPERROOM

# No Dark Clouds: A Tale of the Christ

## Quiz #1 Chapters 1-7

### Section 1: Matching

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A ten-year-old orphan with permanent scars crisscrossing his face; lives in a hidden basement and is very agile at fighting and escaping.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ A cruel, bearded man who forces deformed and orphaned children to beg and keeps all their earnings.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ A Roman centurion who leads patrols, supervises crucifixions, and later offers Beggar Boy a job in the garrison.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ A four-year-old blind, mute boy who is severely malnourished and holds a Roman nail spike; taps a copper pot to beg.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ A beautiful ten-year-old girl with one normal arm and a short stub on the left side; has an exceptional memory and secretly taught herself to read.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A six-year-old completely deaf girl who lip-reads and “reads eyes”; begs while holding a severely deformed infant.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ A nine-year-old boy whose legs were crushed; moves by “scooting” on knee pads and is very skilled at tying knots and ropes.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ A fourteen-year-old girl with metaphyseal dysplasia (very short stature); has an extraordinary singing voice and was abandoned by a Roman official.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ A zealot leader planning ambushes against Roman patrols; strong, bearded, and hates the idea of peace with Rome.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The large Roman military complex in Jerusalem where Beggar Boy later works in the granary.

- A. Taskmaster
- B. Aditya
- C. Figs
- D. Baa-Foo
- E. Rebekah
- F. Scooter
- G. Beggar Boy
- H. Barabbas
- I. Leonidas
- J. Fortress Antonia

**Section 2: Fill in the Blank** (10 questions) Complete each sentence with the correct word or short phrase from the story.

11. Aditya's name comes from an ancient language in \_\_\_\_\_ and means she is unique and full of charm.
12. Beggar Boy's secret home is an abandoned \_\_\_\_\_ in a dilapidated rock house, entered through a hidden hole covered with debris.
13. Figs always holds a four-inch Roman \_\_\_\_\_ spike, which is one of the few things he can claim as his own.
14. Taskmaster makes Baa-Foo beg by mimicking the gesture of hunger and saying " \_\_\_\_\_ ... \_\_\_\_\_ ... Fooo ... Fooooooo."
15. The elderly caravan woman gave Beggar Boy an \_\_\_\_\_ and told him someone on the Fountain Road needed his help.
16. During the ambush in the marketplace, Beggar Boy warned \_\_\_\_\_ by yelling "Look out!!" just before Barabbas lunged with a knife.
17. Centurion \_\_\_\_\_ had a gravely ill servant named Favian who was dramatically healed after Jesus spoke the word.
18. Beggar Boy nicknamed himself the " \_\_\_\_\_-master" when he carried Figs on his back to escape Taskmaster.
19. Mishea, the Ethiopian tutor, wrote the words " \_\_\_\_\_ " (meaning "God is my healer") on wood using red gum from the myrrh tree.
20. In chapter 7, Jesus healed Baa-Foo's \_\_\_\_\_ by placing His hands over her ears, and she immediately began laughing and speaking sounds clearly.

**Section 3: True or False** (5 questions) Write True or False for each statement.

21. \_\_\_\_\_ Taskmaster allows the begging children to keep a portion of the coins they collect each day.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Rebekah secretly reads Aramaic and Hebrew documents she finds or steals, hiding them in her flower basket.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ Barabbas and his zealots planned to ambush a Roman patrol because they wanted to support Jesus' message of peace.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ Beggar Boy saved Centurion Leonidas' life by warning him when Barabbas was about to stab him from behind during the marketplace fight.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ After Jesus healed the deformed infant and gave Baa-Foo hearing, Taskmaster backed away peacefully without any resistance.

## **Answer Sheet**

### **Section 1: Matching**

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. G | 2. A | 3. I | 4. C | 5. E  |
| 6. D | 7. F | 8. B | 9. H | 10. J |

### **Section 2: Fill in the Blank**

11. India
12. basement (or abandoned basement)
13. nail (or Roman nail spike)
14. Baa ... Baa ... (or Baa ... Fooo ... or similar phonetic version from the text)
15. acorn
16. Leonidas
17. Darius
18. escape
19. Yahweh Rapha
20. hearing (or deafness / deaf ears)

### **Section 3: True or False**

21. False (he keeps all the coins and punishes them if unsatisfied)
22. True
23. False (they wanted violent overthrow of Rome and saw Jesus' peace teachings as unhelpful)
24. True
25. False (he later rushed at Jesus in rage with a club and was pushed back by an invisible angel)

# No Dark Clouds: A Tale of the Christ

## Quiz #2 Chapters 8-14

### Section 1: Matching

- \_\_\_\_\_ The High Priest who tears his clothes and charges Jesus under oath, asking if He is the Christ, the Son of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The disciple who betrays Jesus with a kiss in the garden and later receives thirty pieces of silver from the Sanhedrin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Ethiopian tutor in Pilate's household who reads Isaiah to Beggar Boy and encourages Aditya about her future in Rome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Tetrarch of Galilee who mocks Jesus by dressing Him in a purple robe, calls Him a "king of nothing," and sends Him back to Pilate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The garden on the hill where Jesus prays, is betrayed, and is arrested after the Last Supper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The disciple who denies knowing Jesus three times before the rooster crows twice, then weeps bitterly and runs away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The healed deaf girl who tries to plead for Jesus at the Sanhedrin courtyard fire and sees Peter deny Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The zealot leader captured by Leonidas in the rock quarry; later chained in the dungeon and saluted by Leonidas as a "defeated soldier."
- \_\_\_\_\_ The large Roman military complex in Jerusalem where Pilate holds court, Barabbas is imprisoned, and Beggar Boy works in the granary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A woman who knew Jesus personally and tells Beggar Boy on the road that Jesus will be in Jerusalem for Passover.

- A. Judas Iscariot
- B. Mary Magdalene
- C. Herod Antipas
- D. Caiaphas
- E. Peter
- F. Baa-Foo
- G. Barabbas
- H. Mishea
- I. Fortress Antonia
- J. Gethsemane

**Section 2: Fill in the Blank** (10 questions) Complete each sentence with the correct word or short phrase from the story.

11. Judas asks for a “gratuity” and receives thirty pieces of \_\_\_\_\_ from Ezra as payment for betraying Jesus.
12. Figs \_\_\_\_\_ peacefully in Aditya’s arms; she awakens to see a beautiful hillside through the wall and hears him clearly say, “Goodbye, Aditya, I love you.”
13. Beggar Boy plants a second \_\_\_\_\_ given by the elderly caravan woman, hoping it will grow into a tree like the one near Figs’ grave.
14. Aditya is sold for three thousand \_\_\_\_\_ and performs her song “On My Mother’s Knee” at Pilate’s dinner party.
15. During the Last Supper, Jesus washes the disciples’ feet and says the cup is the new covenant in His \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Peter denies knowing Jesus three times, and immediately after the second denial, a \_\_\_\_\_ crows.
17. In the Sanhedrin trial, a temple guard \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus in the face after He says, “If I spoke the truth, why did you strike Me?”
18. Herod Antipas mocks Jesus by placing a \_\_\_\_\_ robe on Him and calls Him a “king of nothing.”
19. Pilate declares he finds “no guilt” in Jesus but sends Him to \_\_\_\_\_ because Jesus is from Galilee.
20. Beggar Boy ties a rope to a clay pot of hot water and drags it onto the “\_\_\_\_\_” at the campfire after they mock his search for Jesus.

**Section 3: True or False** (5 questions) Write True or False for each statement.

21. \_\_\_\_\_ Caiaphas tells Judas that bringing him “the slave” (Jesus) will earn the gratitude of the Sanhedrin.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Figs’ mother, Charis, greets and embraces him in Heaven after Guardian Angel Two carries him there.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ Aditya escapes from her new master in Rome and returns to Jerusalem to find Beggar Boy.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, during Jesus’ arrest in Gethsemane.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ Tiberius is sent by Leonidas to spy inside Herod’s palace and witnesses Herod mock and robe Jesus.

## **Answer Sheet**

### **Section 1: Matching**

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. D | 2. A | 3. H | 4. C | 5. J  |
| 6. E | 7. F | 8. G | 9. I | 10. B |

### **Section 2: Fill in the Blank**

11. silver
12. (passed away / died)
13. acorn
14. denarii
15. blood
16. rooster
17. strike Me (or strike Me / why did you strike Me)
18. purple
- 19 Herod (or Herod Antipas)
20. jokers (or the jokers / the three jokers)

### **Section 3: True or False**

21. True
22. True
23. False (she is taken toward Rome and encouraged by Mishea to use her gift there; she does not escape and return)
24. True
25. True

# No Dark Clouds: A Tale of the Christ

## Quiz #3 Chapters 15- 21

### Section 1: Matching

- \_\_\_\_\_ The new name Jesus gives Beggar Boy at the Sea of Galilee, meaning “God Remembers.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Roman Governor’s wife who sends an urgent note to Pilate during the trial warning him to have nothing to do with the “righteous Man” because of her troubling dream.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The village on the road from Jerusalem where Jesus appears to Favian and Cleopas, explains the Scriptures, and is recognized when He breaks bread.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The place outside Jerusalem where Jesus ascends into heaven before about 200 believers, with angels promising He will return in the same way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The cruel owner of Rebekah who locks her in a sheep cage for talking about Jesus; later sells her for four times her original price to Claudia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The disciple-like follower who first sees the risen Jesus at the tomb, clings to Him, and is told to go tell the others He is ascending to the Father.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The zealot leader released instead of Jesus during Passover; later seen secretly watching the tomb being sealed and guarded.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Ethiopian tutor who reads Isaiah, comforts Beggar Boy, holds hands with Darius, and helps free Rebekah from Taskmaster.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The large split rock at Calvary where Jesus’ body was crucified; later the site where Zachary plants an olive seed from Gethsemane.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Roman tribune who breaks the spear after piercing Jesus’ side, later stands alone at the empty tomb, and embraces Zachary while promising future loyalty if he ever follows Jesus.

- A. Claudia
- B. Zachary
- C. Barabbas
- D. Mary Magdalene
- E. Mount of Olives
- F. Emmaus
- G. Taskmaster (Herminius)
- H. Mishea
- I. Leonidas
- J. Empty Tomb

**Section 2: Fill in the Blank** (10 questions) Complete each sentence with the correct word or short phrase from the story.

11. Pilate washes his hands in a basin and declares, "I am innocent of this man's \_\_\_\_\_; see to that yourselves!"
12. Jesus tells the criminal crucified beside Him, "Today you will be with Me in \_\_\_\_\_."
13. After the resurrection, Jesus appears to two travelers on the road to \_\_\_\_\_ and explains the Scriptures before vanishing when He breaks bread.
14. The elderly caravan woman gives Beggar Boy an \_\_\_\_\_ seed from the Garden of Gethsemane to plant, symbolizing eternal life.
15. When the large stone is rolled away from the tomb, an angel sits on it, and the Roman soldiers fall down as if \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Mary Magdalene is the first to see the risen Jesus at the tomb; He tells her not to cling to Him because He has not yet ascended to the \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Jesus ascends into heaven from the \_\_\_\_\_ of Olives, promising the Holy Spirit and telling the disciples to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.
18. Four of Beggar Boy's five permanent scars disappear while watching Jesus ascend, leaving only one three-inch scar on his \_\_\_\_\_ cheek.
19. Claudia pays Taskmaster four times Rebekah's original purchase price to free her and gives her the Latin name meaning "\_\_\_\_\_ of the sun."
20. Zachary plants the olive seed about twenty-five paces from the \_\_\_\_\_ tomb, hoping a huge tree will grow there for thousands of years.

**Section 3: True or False** (5 questions) Write True or False for each statement.

21. \_\_\_\_\_ When the Holy Veil in the Temple rips from top to bottom at Jesus' death, Caiaphas enters the Holy of Holies immediately to investigate.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Barabbas is released during Passover and later secretly watches the sealing and guarding of Jesus' tomb.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus gives Beggar Boy the name "Zachary" (meaning "God Remembers") after they share a breakfast of fish by the Sea of Galilee.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ Rebekah is freed from Taskmaster when Claudia buys her for four times her original price and renames her "Radiance of the Sun."
25. \_\_\_\_\_ At the end, Leonidas tells Zachary he is now a full disciple of Jesus and will follow Him completely.

## **Answer Sheet**

### **Section 1: Matching**

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. B | 2. A | 3. F | 4. E | 5. G  |
| 6. D | 7. C | 8. H | 9. J | 10. I |

### **Section 2: Fill in the Blank**

11. blood
12. (paradise
13. Emmaus
14. olive (or olive pit / olive seed)
15. dead (or fainted / fallen / unconscious)
16. Father
17. Mount (of Olives)
18. right
19. radiance
20. empty (or Jesus' / the empty)

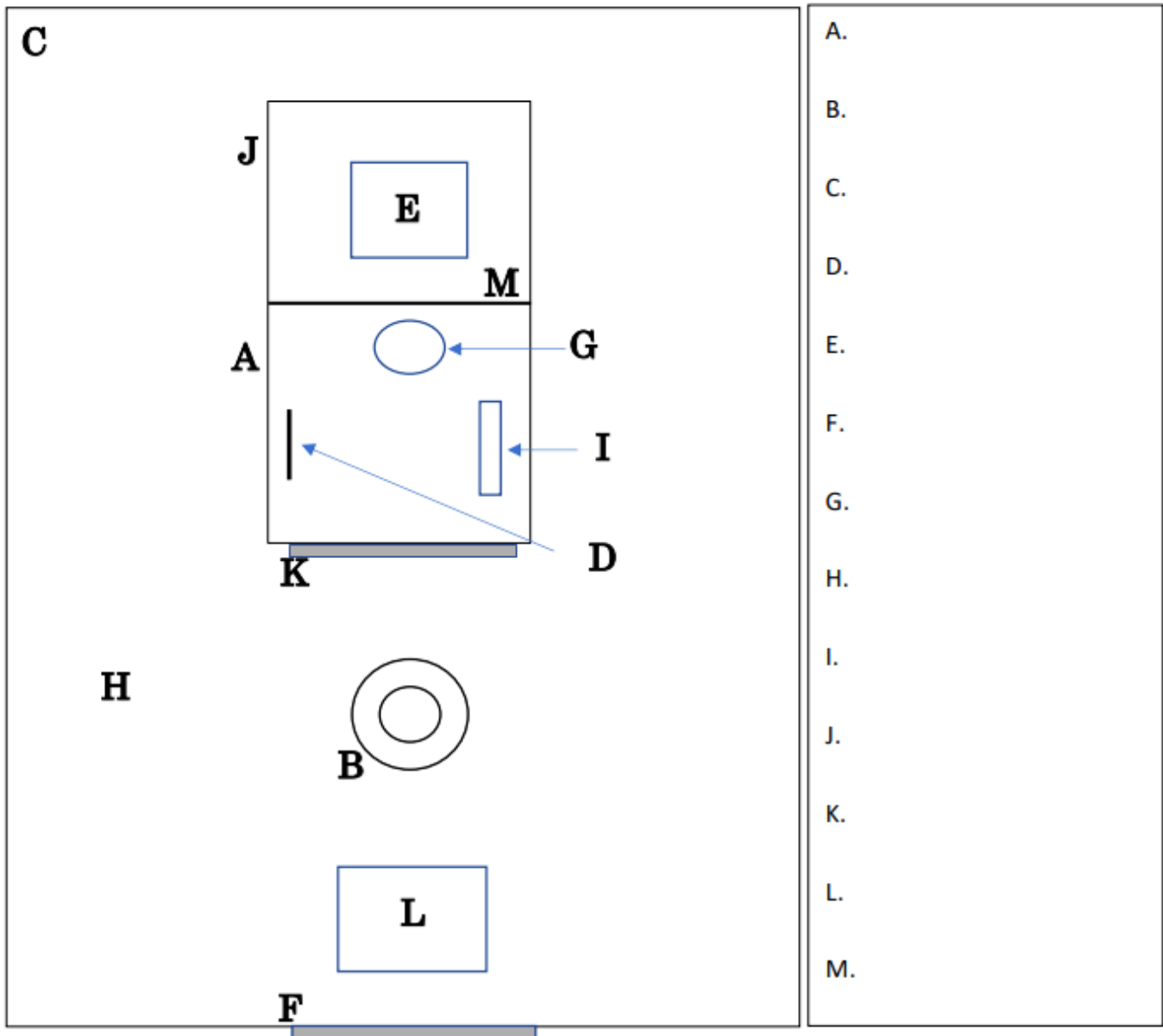
### **Section 3: True or False**

21. False (he stands stunned at the torn veil but does not enter; he is troubled by its exposure of the Mercy Seat)
22. True
23. True
24. True
25. False (Leonidas says he is not yet a disciple but promises that if he ever becomes one, he will give total dedication and loyalty)

# No Dark Clouds A Tale of the Christ

## The Tabernacle of Moses

Label the parts and furniture of the Tabernacle with the Word Bank listed below:



The Screen/Door

Golden Candlestick

The Gate

Table of Shewbread

The Ark of the Covenant

Court of the Tabernacle

Holy of Holies

The Fence

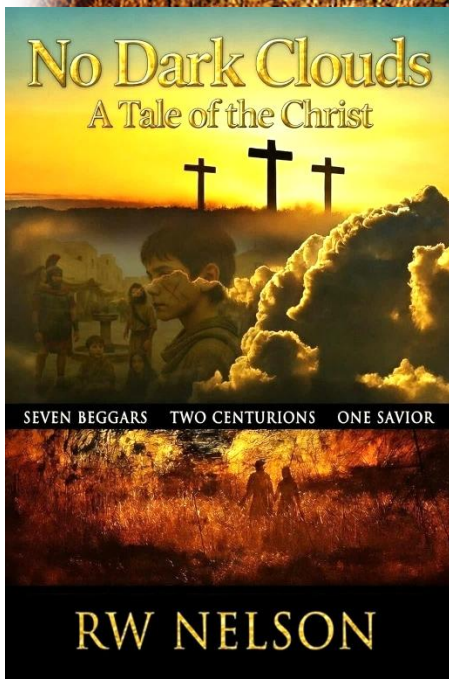
Altar of Incense

Bronze Laver

Bronze Altar

Veil

Holy Place



# No Dark Clouds: A Tale of the Christ

by RW Nelson

## Extended Book Description

Inspired by the author's two-year observation of the struggles and disabilities of India's beggar children, No Dark Clouds is a unique Christian fiction intertwining the lives of seven beggar children in Biblical Jerusalem with historical figures of the time, including Jesus.

The novel brings forth the raw emotions of what a personal encounter with Jesus might have been like for a youth living in Biblical Israel at the time of Christ. The story also gives the reader a possible glimpse of the lives of those who found themselves caught up in the Passion Week, trial, and crucifixion: people such as a slave, a Roman soldier, a Pharisee, Barabbas and King Herod. This fictional account takes the reader to Jerusalem on Resurrection Sunday, where he or she experiences the life-changing effects of that day in the lives of Pilate, his wife Claudia, the Disciples, Cleopas, and even the High Priest Caiaphas.

Beggar Boy and his companions all bear a form of disability. For him, five scars inflicted by a cruel man are etched across his face, rendering him an outcast. He has no home and no guardians to take care of him. At ten years of age, he has to beg and steal to survive. His friends are controlled by Taskmaster whose income is derived from the children's begging. Aditya, the oldest at fourteen years of age, is also one of the shortest beggars. Her disability (similar to that of dwarfism), forces her to sing in the marketplaces in order to survive.

The beggar friends grow up in a tumultuous Israel. The Zealots (led by Barabbas) threaten rebellion while the Romans (led by Pilate) are focused on squashing any type of revolt. In the midst of all of this, Jesus continues with his ministry and carrying out miraculous healings, even in the midst of constant rejection and persecution from the Pharisees and Sadducees. In particular, one of the stories that appears is that of the centurion (Darius) who pleads with Jesus to heal his servant (Favian). Another miracle is that of the blind man who is healed by Jesus smearing mud in the blind man's eyes.

By saving the life of a centurion (Leonidas) during an ambush by Barabbas, Beggar Boy is 'rewarded' by being allowed to live and work within the Roman Fortress Antonia. This also provides a way for him to steal food from the granary and distribute it to his beggar friends. A major task for the boy is the carrying and administering of vinegar wine to criminals being crucified on a cross.

When Beggar Boy learns (then verifies) that a 'Healer-Man' has healed two of his beggar friends (one from deafness, the other from deformity in the arms and legs), he sets out by leaving Jerusalem to find this man (Jesus) in the hopes of being healed of his knife-scarred face. However, Jesus is in the Holy City for the Last Supper, Gethsemane, His trial, and crucifixion. He returns to the Roman fortress only to find out that a crucifixion for three criminals will take place soon at Golgotha. Grabbing his javelin and vinegar wine, he hurriedly departs to Golgotha to administer vinegar wine to the criminals. A climactic encounter unfolds when Beggar Boy arrives at Calvary only to realize that it is the 'Healer-Man' who is being crucified. The boy had wanted Jesus to heal his scarred face, but Jesus needed the boy to give Him vinegar wine instead. The boy experiences 'spirit-crushing' disappointment and betrayal by his own Roman caretakers.

The uniqueness of No Dark Clouds is that it includes Biblical study material embedded within the storyline as experienced by the characters. It truly is an educational venture into the 'realm of the heart'. Though many novels and motion pictures end at the crucifixion, No Dark Clouds follows the lives of the characters from the crucifixion, to the Resurrection, to the Ascension, and beyond. The 'empty tomb' profoundly impacts not only the beggar children, but the Jewish religious leaders, the Romans, and Jesus' disciples and followers.

A key fictional character is Mishea, a twenty-year-old Ethiopian slave who is the royal tutor for the Roman children in Jerusalem. She becomes the 'mother figure' for the beggar children, and is the first to understand Messianic Scriptures from the book of Isaiah.

'Life-trait' themes of the characters abound within the novel including: God made you unique, reputation matters, judge someone from within, true love can conquer darkness, and everyone has God-given gifts. No Dark Clouds offers readers a unique blend of Biblical history, geography, Bible references, and Christian doctrine, all wrapped around the profound story of a beggar boy and his search for and encounter with Jesus.