

Lesson 6 | October 11, 2020

God Sends His Messengers

Study Text: Isaiah 9:13–21; 11:1–10; Jeremiah 3:6–13; Ezekiel 37:15–23; Hosea 8:1–9; Joel 2:12–17; Zephaniah 3:14–20

Central Truth: **God sent the prophets to call His people to repentance.**

Key Verse: Amos 3:7

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets (KJV).

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets (NIV).

Learning Objectives

- Understand the nature of idolatry and why Israel continued to enter into that sin.
- Explore how idolatry might pose a temptation to Christians in our society today.
- Identify and repent of beliefs and practices that reflect modern secular values, which should not be mingled with Christian beliefs and practices.

Introducing the Lesson



Say: “If I were an Israelite back in that time, I would never have bowed down to an idol!” Perhaps you’ve been inclined to say this in response to biblical passages on Israel’s idolatry. Yet we must understand that Israel adopted idolatry in part as a source of assurance of their own security (i.e., they wanted their crops to grow, so they mingled worship of the Lord with worship of the Canaanite god that was believed to bring rain). As we study, we should ask, “Whom or what do we trust in today?”

Opening Activity—Additions” to God?

Ask: What kinds of things do people sometimes put “alongside” of God as a source of hope or security for their lives? (Possible answers include superstitions, good luck charms, horoscopes, etc.) **If a black cat crosses your path you will have bad ...**

When you break a mirror, you will have seven years of bad ... We depend on God, not luck.

Say: It was often the case that the Israelites worshipped *both* God and idols; that is, they mingled pagan worship into their lives rather than remain exclusive in their

worship of God. **Going to church yet trusting and depending on your horoscope. This mixing of worship still poses a threat. God still demands undivided worship, not mingled with things like cultural gimmicks, popular teachings, political dogma, secular values, or human sources of security.** As we explore the Old Testament prophets, we must examine our own propensity to introduce “idol worship” into our lives. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

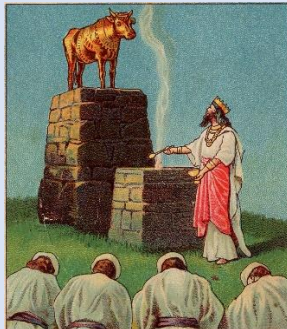
In the Book of Judges, God’s people became guilty of all kinds of idolatry. Yet their idol worship began earlier, while Moses was on Mount Sinai. Throughout the historical books of Samuel and Kings, Israel’s successes and failures were tied to their willingness to follow the Law and reject idolatry. Throughout this time, God sent various prophets to confront the people about their sins and call them back into faithful covenant relationship with Him.

Part 1—Repent and Return to Covenant Idolatry Is Infidelity Against God

Jeremiah 3:6–13

[Jer 3:6-13 KJV] 6 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen [that] which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. 7 And I said after she had done all these [things], Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw [it]. 8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. 11 And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. 12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; [and] I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I [am] merciful, saith the LORD, [and] I will not keep [anger] for ever. 13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast

**scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree,
and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.**



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JEROBOAM'S IDOLATRY
1 Kings 12:28-33.
GOLDEN TEXT:—Keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5:21.

Say: In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God used marriage to symbolize His relationship with His people. Prophetic literature is no exception. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Jeremiah likened Judah (the nation to which he prophesied, around 620 BC.) to an adulterous wife who would be divorced for infidelity (Jeremiah 3:6; see verse 1). Unfaithfulness is devastating to a relationship. All manner of trust is severely damaged, sometimes irreparably.

The expression “on every high hill and under every spreading tree” is a telling description of their unfaithfulness (3:7, NIV). The “hill” alludes to the high places used in Baal worship, while the tree likely points to worship of Asherah, represented by poles or trees that were held sacred (see also verse 9).

Verses 11–13 also reinforce the seriousness of Jeremiah’s indictment. Judah had not learned their lesson when God “divorced” the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC. and they were taken captive by the Assyrians. God’s decision to send Jeremiah to the north (verse 12) delivered a harsh message to Judah: God saw faithless, exiled Israel as more righteous than unfaithful Judah.

God’s people were outwardly observing the rituals God had given them—even while they were worshipping other gods. In essence, they maintained an outward appearance of relationship with God even as they pursued other lovers (see verse 10, noting that Josiah’s reforms were ultimately not taken seriously). As Christians, we must guard against dividing our affections between God and a fallen world.

Resource Packet Item 1: Why Worship Idols Made by Hands?

Distribute the information sheet to your students. You may want to summarize it for them, or you may want to send it home with them for further study.

Discuss

? How is marriage a good example to describe God’s relationship with His people?

? What examples from other parts of the Bible can you think of that use marriage in this way?

? What might constitute some modern examples of idolatry among Christians? (Colossians 3:5 provides a helpful example.)

God Graciously Calls His People To Repent

Joel 2:12–17

[Joe 2:12-17 KJV] 12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye [even] to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; [even] a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: 16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. 17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where [is] their God?



Say: Joel may be best known for his prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 2:28–29 referenced in Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–21). However, earlier in Joel 2, he delivered a plea for God’s people to repent of their sin and turn to Him. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Many believe that Joel prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the times of the wicked rulers, Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah, and continued to prophesy during the reign of Joash, who was one of the few good kings. If this is the case, then, repentance is a key component of his prophecy. **Verses 12–13 provide a good definition of what it means to repent: It is much more than outward actions; it includes mourning over one’s sins, which compels that person to turn to the gracious and loving God who forgives.** In Bible times, it was customary to tear one’s garments when expressing profound grief. A penitent person, then, must be brokenhearted. This sorrow leads to a forsaking of the sin. Repentance brings changes to the way a person lives.

Joel emphasized that God does not desire to bring judgment on people (Joel 2:13–14). His very nature is to be gracious, merciful, and patient. God created human beings to know and to love Him.

While we often think of repentance as an individual act, God also desires that it happen within a community. Since all of Judah had failed to obey the Lord, the whole nation needed to repent. A solemn assembly was called and every person was required to attend (verses 15–17). Spiro, Panama, Poteau, Bokoshe, America needs to repent.

The priests, as spiritual leaders, were to cry out to God to spare His people. In doing so, they appealed to God's reputation: that His inheritance (His people) would not become an object of scorn, and that other nations would not conclude that He had abandoned His people. Clearly, repentance should include the sorrowful recognition that God is dishonored by sin.

Discuss

? In your own words, how would you define repentance?

? Since the Church is the community of God in the world today, how can Joel 2:15–17 apply to the way Christians deal with sin? (Note that individual sin is dealt with differently than corporate sin, where the whole body has strayed; see Matthew 18:15–17; Galatians 6:1.)

? How can knowing that God is gracious toward His people when they sin impact the way we deal with others when they sin?

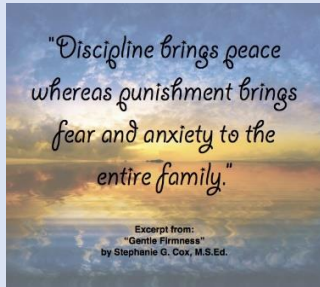
Part 2—Lack of Repentance Punished

God's People Refuse To Repent

Isaiah 9:13–21

[Isa 9:13-21 KJV] 13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. 14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. 15 The ancient and honourable, he [is] the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he [is] the tail. 16 For the leaders of this people cause [them] to err; and [they that are] led of them [are] destroyed. 17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one [is] an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still. 18 For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up [like] the lifting up of smoke. 19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the

fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. 20 And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm: 21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: [and] they together [shall be] against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.



Say: Even in His anger, God did not cease to love His people. He had chosen the sons of Jacob, specifically the tribe of Judah to be the lineage through whom the Messiah would come. His punishment was meant to restore them. Just as loving parents discipline their children, God disciplines His children for their own good. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Isaiah was a prophet during the eighth century BC. He ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel until they fell to Assyria. Then, Isaiah continued to minister to Judah until the turn of the seventh century BC. Isaiah 9:13–21 was directed at the Northern Kingdom before they fell.

The northern kingdom of Israel refused to repent in spite of God's punishment (verses 11–16). The elders and the prophets—who should have been godly spiritual leaders—were leading the people astray. **So God held the nation accountable for their stubborn rebellion, declaring that “everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks folly” (verse 17, NIV).** The evil of the people burned like a self-consuming fire, and God's wrath burned toward them (verses 18–19).

The description of the people's rebellion culminates in graphic terms, in verses 20–21. Here, cannibalism is a metaphor for the breakup of tribal unity as Manasseh devoured Ephraim and vice-versa. Then they both turned on Judah. This reminds us of the Book of Judges, where the people's crimes against each other reached grotesque levels, such as in the story of the Levite and his concubine (see Judges 19–20). Like the days of the judges, lawlessness and rebellion ruled the day.

Discuss

? What can we learn from Isaiah 9:13–21 about serving in spiritual leadership, as well as about choosing our spiritual leaders?

? The people of Israel did not repent of their sin in spite of the fact that God had punished them to send a clear message. What kind of messages does God send today to encourage us to repent?

God Allows People To Choose Their Own Way

Hosea 8:1–9

[Hos 8:1-9 KJV] 1 [Set] the trumpet to thy mouth. [He shall come] as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. 2 Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. 3 Israel hath cast off [the thing that is] good: the enemy shall pursue him. 4 They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew [it] not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. 5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast [thee] off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long [will it be] ere they attain to innocency? 6 For from Israel [was] it also: the workman made it; therefore it [is] not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. 7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. 8 Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure. 9 For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.



Say: It is God's will for everyone to love and obey Him. Peter says, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9, niv). This principle was true in Old Testament times, New Testament times, and is still true today. Yet God gives people their own choice. Unfortunately, for

many years, both Israel and Judah made wrong choices. In the end they had to be punished. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hosea prophesied in the Northern Kingdom, prior to its fall in the eighth century BC. His prophecy is best known for the metaphor of adultery in the opening chapters, as Hosea was told to marry a prostitute and to have children by her. Gomer, the unfaithful wife, is symbolic of Israel's unfaithfulness and betrayal of God's love.

In Hosea 8:1–9, we find the explanation for God's judgment. Simply put, they forsook the covenant and chose to go their own way (8:1). Verses 4–6 mention specific charges, such as appointing kings apart from God's guidance. Notably, they also crafted idols of gold and silver. Hosea also alluded to the golden calves that were set up by King Jeroboam at Dan and Bethel, the northernmost and southernmost extents of the Northern Kingdom. Idolatry essentially filled the entire nation.

For their sin the people would “sow the wind and reap the whirlwind” (verse 7, NIV). Their crops would be devastated, and then they would be taken in exile to Assyria because they would not turn from their worship of other gods. **God’s people—then and now—must recognize that stubborn, unrepented rebellion against God will ultimately bring terrible, tragic consequences.**

Resource Packet Item 2: A Choice To Be Made

Distribute the work sheet, and let students read the story and answer the questions individually or in small groups.

Discuss

? **What are some common ways God’s people might fall into rebellion today, and how can we avoid these spiritual traps?**

? How would you respond to a believer who claims that Christians today need not focus any attention on God’s judgment for sin, since we are under grace?

Part 3—Hope for the Future

The Messiah Is Promised

Isaiah 11:1–10

[Isa 11:1-10 KJV] 1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. 6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. 10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an

ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.



Say: In spite of the disobedience and subsequent exile of Israel and Judah, God would not forget His promise of a Messiah. From His statement to the serpent in Genesis 3:15 to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the only hope for Israel then—and for people today—is Jesus. In spite of the seeming hopelessness that would come during the Exile, God sent prophets to also deliver messages of hope for the future. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The prophecy of Isaiah 11:1–11 is often believed to have been given around the time of King Ahaz of Judah. Even though exile was more than a century in the future, these were tumultuous years in Judah, as Ahaz was an exceptionally evil king.

The metaphor of a tree in 11:1 describes a “rod” or “shoot” that will spring from the “stem” or “stump” of Jesse. During Isaiah’s ministry, the Davidic monarchy seemed to be in jeopardy. Sin was rampant and enemies threatened God’s people. Yet those who later went into exile from Judah would certainly struggle all the more, trying to process current events in light of the promise of 2 Samuel 7:16. **David’s line was supposed to continue forever. Yet David’s lineage had been cut off and there was no king.**

Isaiah’s prophecy would offer hope. **The dead stump (David’s dynasty) would sprout and come alive once more. This ruler in the lineage of David will host the Spirit of the Lord, by whom He will rule with understanding, wise counsel, and knowledge. He will delight in the fear of the Lord, which gives evidence of a true knowledge of God. His kingdom will be exemplified by a peace in which deadly predators will live in total harmony with humans. In Isaiah 11:9–10, an earth “filled with the knowledge of the Lord” (verse 9, NIV) will result in the turning of the nations to the “Root of Jesse” (verse 10) Although Isaiah was earlier than many of the prophets, God’s plan of redemption through the Messiah was already beginning to unfold. Jesus, in the lineage of David, would be the fulfillment of this and many other Messianic prophecies, spoken by the prophets over the course of hundreds of years.**

Discuss

? What does Isaiah 11 teach us about God’s promises?

? What are some ways God has given you hope amid difficult times?

God Promises Restoration

Ezekiel 37:15–23; Zephaniah 3:14–20

[Eze 37:15-23 KJV] 15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then

take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and [for] all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. 18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou [meanest] by these? 19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which [is] in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, [even] with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. 20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. 21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

[Zep 3:14-20 KJV] 14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, [even] the LORD, [is] in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. 16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: [and to] Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. 17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee [is] mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. 18 I will gather [them that are] sorrowful for the solemn assembly, [who] are of thee, [to whom] the reproach of it [was] a burden. 19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. 20 At that time will I bring you [again], even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.



Say: God's love is unfathomable. After years of disobedience Judah was exiled to Babylon, but God did not forget them. Instead, He sent them a message of hope. No matter how dark our circumstances may be, God still has a message of hope for His people. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The prophet Ezekiel was one of the early exiles taken to Babylon, approximately ten years before

Jerusalem fell. Thus he would have been one of the first witnesses to the crisis of faith that developed in Babylonian captivity. **In response to the fears of the exiles, God sent a message of unity and restoration.** Ezekiel 37:1–14 contains the familiar vision of dry bones that re-form into a living representation of a restored and unified Israel. Then, in verses 15–23, Ezekiel presented an object lesson. He was to take two sticks and write “for Judah” on one and “for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim” on the other (verse 16, KJV). Judah represented the southern kingdom, while Ephraim represented the north. These were to be joined together in the presence of the people to show that there would once again be a single nation, unified by God. What a blessing this message must have been to the people in exile so far from home.

Zephaniah, who prophesied during the reign of King Josiah and before the fall of Judah, also gave a message of hope. Even though Josiah himself was a good king, Zephaniah focused on the judgment that would befall Judah because of their infidelity. Zephaniah 3:14–20 looks forward to a time after the judgment of Judah, in which hope will return. **God will punish all those who oppress His people. Then He will bring them back to Zion and restore their fortunes.**

Resource Packet Item 3: Jesus, the Messiah

Distribute the work sheet and divide the class into small groups. Assign each group one pair of the Scriptures listed, and ask them to look them up and describe how the New Testament passage shows the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy.

Discuss

? What are some ways God brings restoration into the lives of those who place their trust in Him today?

? Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah all painted a picture of joy, unity, and divine rule in the future. How might you share this kind of hope with the world around you in spite of the darkness of our times?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Even before the final judgment came upon God's people in the Old Testament, God had already made a plan to extend grace, healing, acceptance, and unity. As Christians, we have the benefit of knowing how His plan was implemented through the Messiah. In the Book of Matthew, Jesus is shown to be a direct descendant of King David. As such, Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah as One coming from

the “stump of Jesse.” God brought a remnant of Judah back after the Exile, but Ezekiel’s vision includes all Christians. In both Isaiah and Zephaniah, the picture of the kingdom the Messiah would introduce has not been fully realized. Our society cannot be characterized by peacefulness, or as being full of the knowledge of the Lord. **Jesus gave us instructions to make disciples of all nations and to show the world we are His disciples by demonstrating our love one for another. By doing what God has asked us to do, we are playing our part to usher in the age these prophets foresaw.**

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Examine your life to see if there is anything for which you need to repent.
- Choose one thing you can do this week to be more obedient to God.
- Choose one person in your life—a family member, friend, coworker, or someone you meet in the marketplace or on the street—and begin a relationship with that person through which you can help them come to know Jesus.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

A Future Prophet Like Moses.

Deuteronomy 18:15–19

[Deu 18:15-19 KJV] 15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well [spoken that] which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require [it] of him.

Tuesday:

False Prophets Described.

Deuteronomy 18:20–22

[Deu 18:20-22 KJV] 20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Wednesday:

Israel Judged for Rejecting God’s Messengers.

2 Chronicles 36:14–21

[2Ch 36:14-21 KJV] 14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. 15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till [there was] no remedy. 17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave [them] all into his hand. 18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all [these] he brought to Babylon. 19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. 20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: [for] as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Thursday:

God's Messenger Prepares the Way.

Matthew 3:1-6

[Mat 3:1-6 KJV] 1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Friday:

Message to Joseph and Mary.

Luke 2:25-35

[Luk 2:25-35 KJV] 25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name [was] Simeon; and the same man [was] just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this [child] is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken

against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Saturday:

Agabus Prophecies Paul's Arrest.

Acts 21:8-14

[Act 21:8-14 KJV] 8 And the next [day] we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was [one] of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. 10 And as we tarried [there] many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver [him] into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.