

Back To Basics

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CLARITY

Johnie Edwards

When appeal is made to Bible teaching, in many areas, someone pops up and says, “We cannot understand the teaching due to lack of clarity.” Let’s take a look at a couple of Bible subjects where this claim is made.

1) **MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE.** Think of all the concepts held on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Some are justifying diverse teaching on the grounds that the Bible is not clear on the subject. Here is what I want you to do: Read Matthew 19:9, as if you have never read it before. “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” Have you read it? Now, let me ask you: Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? Who is under discussion? What is being done? What is the exception? Is marrying another discussed? What sin is committed? Does the fornicator have the Scriptural right to remarry? Does the one not involved in the fornication have the Scriptural right to remarry? See anything unclear about this?

2) **BAPTISM.** When most do not believe baptism is required to be saved, one would think the subject is hid in obscure language.

Now, take the time to read a couple of passages to see how clear they are. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16). Do you see the passage saying one that believes and is baptized shall be saved? What does it take for one to be damned? Now, a second passage. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). What two things are required for one to have remission of sins? Pretty clear, don’t you think?

3) **ROLE OF WOMEN.** The tendency today is for people to expand the role of women. You would think the Bible is unclear on such matters. A reading of 1 Timothy 2:12-14 will show how clear this really is. Paul said, “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” After reading these verses, do you see anything unclear in this teaching? Why is it that we can’t understand the role of women in the church?

Are these passages not clear?

GAY BAPTISTS STILL SAVED?

Larry Ray Hafley

Did you see in the news that the Southern Baptist Convention was being urged to accept homosexuals into fellowship? They voted it down, but not without a huge protest by the liberals and the lesbians.

Which brings up another question - we all know that Southern Baptists subscribe to the doctrine of "once saved, always saved," or, "once in grace, always in grace." In other words, they believe the moment one is saved, he can never fall from grace and be lost (This doctrine is refuted by numerous Scriptures, such as, Ezekiel 3:17-21; Luke 12:42-46; Galatians 5:1-4; Hebrews 3:1, 12-13; 2 Peter 2:20-22).

Now, here is the dilemma for Baptists. Are their homosexual brothers and sisters still saved? If so, why are they not accepted into Baptist Church fellowship? Are homosexuals too *bad* to be accepted in the Baptist Church, but still *good* enough to go to heaven? Will some Baptist tell us?

Also, the homosexual Baptists said this about their "straight" Baptist brethren: "With 15.8 million members in 40,000 churches, the Southern Baptists have become the primary

source of misinformation about God's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered children" (Houston Chronicle, 6/13/2000, 4A). So, the homosexuals claim they are "God's children" in the same way their normal brethren are. However, they say that their Baptist brethren are a "primary source of misinformation." Do you know what *misinformation* is? It is a lie. If I say something false about you, if I issue "misinformation" about you, I have lied about you.

Now, where does that leave the average Baptist? Can Baptists who issue "misinformation" (lie) about their brethren be saved (Rev. 21:8)? With their doctrine of once saved, always saved, the homosexuals will have to agree that their brethren can lie about them and still be saved.

Either way, whether one is a regular Baptist or a homosexual, he has to wonder about the doctrine that says one cannot fall away and be lost. Since they both charge each other with heinous sins, surely they cannot maintain that one may commit such transgressions and still be saved in heaven at last! Or, can they?

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HELP: PREACHER CAN'T FIND THE SCRIPTURES!

John Isaac Edwards

Since the Scriptures are able to save, given by inspiration of God, profitable and equip the man of God unto all good works, the preacher is charged, "Preach the word..." (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:1-2). There are some things I have not been able to preach, because I can't find the Scriptures. Can you help me find the Scriptures?

1) **TEACHING A CHILD IS BORN WITH THE GUILT OF SIN.** Where is the passage that teaches a child is born into this world with the guilt of sin upon his soul? The Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son..." (Ezek. 18:20).

2) **GIVING WOMEN THE RIGHT TO BE EVANGELISTS, ELDERS, OR DEACONS.** I read of "Philip the evangelist" in Acts 21:8. Where do you read of Philis the evangelist? I thought the qualifications of elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 call for "a man" who is "the husband of one wife" (vv. 1-2, 8, 11-12). Have I missed something?

3) **SHOWING THAT ONCE A PERSON IS SAVED FROM HIS PAST SINS HE CANNOT SIN SO AS TO BE ETERNALLY LOST.** Just one Scripture is all I need that shows this, so I can teach it. Can you help me find it? Why am I warned to take heed, if it is impossible for me to depart from the living God? (Heb. 3:12).

4) **AFFIRMING SALVATION BY FAITH ONLY.** It gives some great comfort to think they are saved by faith alone. I have not been able to preach this, as I have not been able to locate a passage of Scripture that teaches this. James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is

justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24).

5) **ALLOWING SPRINKLING OR POURING FOR BIBLE BAPTISM.** I find where there was "much water" (Jn. 3:23), Jesus came up "out of the water" (Mt. 3:16), and the man of Ethiopia came unto a certain water, went down with the preacher into the water and came up out of the water (Acts 8:36-39). Where do you find Scriptural authority for sprinkling or pouring?

If you know where the Scriptures are, would you please be so kind as to write them down and send them to me? Thank you.

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THANKING GOD IN PRAYER

Charles Carpenter

“**I**n everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Th. 5:18).

1) **IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS.** Thanks is defined as kindly or grateful thoughts; an acknowledgment for a favor or kindness received; an expression of gratitude towards someone.

Being thankful becomes a positive duty; it is not an optional matter with a Christian. To be Christians, we must always be grateful to God and to others. To not possess the grace of thankfulness is to be disobedient in the sight of God. To give thanks in everything is very inclusive. Although it is not always easy, it is a goal that may be attained.

2) **SOME THINGS FOR WHICH TO GIVE THANKS.** We give thanks in success - for a job completed; for a sinner converted; for a bountiful harvest; in rearing children to be faithful. In like manner, we give thanks in failure - to go astray; to yield to temptation.

We give thanks in joy - for a new job or home; for a baptism; for the return of an erring child of God; for faithful Christians. In like manner, we give thanks in sorrow - over the departure of a faithful loved one; for lives spared in natural or man made disasters; over Christians moving away to a new home or job.

We give thanks in laughter - with children and grandchildren; at weddings and graduations; at good happenings in life. In like manner, we give thanks in tears - of joy and love for the goodness of others; when loved ones move away; when ministers leave for a new work.

We give thanks in health - our physical and mental health; our spiritual health; for the ability to work; for nourishing food. In like

manner, we give thanks in sickness - after successful surgery; after recovering from a serious illness; for pain to be at a minimum.

We give thanks in blessing - for good teaching, preaching and song leading; for baptisms after home studies; for promotions and retirement; when bouquets are thrown. In like manner, we give thanks in persecution - for patience and self-control to endure; when living the right life; when mud is thrown.

We give thanks in birth - when a child is born; for the parents of a new child; for the birth of a new Christian. In like manner, we give thanks in death - when a faithful Christian departs this life; when one in ill health ceases to suffer; for the many good memories; for a new convert now being dead to sin.

3) **BEING THANKFUL MUST BE PRACTICED.** It is not necessary to have everything we want, in order to be thankful. As a rule, the most thankful people are not those who have the most of this life's goods.

Let us not think that the thanksgiving which pleases God is acquired in an instant. Let us not think that thanksgiving is solely of our own doing. Being thankful is a matter in which we need Divine assistance. It must be developed by constant effort.

We must practice being thankful for the daily blessings of life. There are many things that we constantly enjoy, but we take them for granted and seem to forget that they come from God. The very abundance of God's blessings sometimes seems to kill thankfulness. Let us cultivate the habit of being thankful for life's daily blessings.

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CATHOLIC BISHOPS DENY CHRIST

Craig Thomas

A recent *Washington Post* article reported on the activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The article stated the bishops had decided: "Campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity 'are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church.'" The article also stated, "...the bishops said last week that the Old Testament covenant between the Jews and God is valid and that Jews do not need to convert to Christianity to be saved." Documentation of this teaching can be found on the Conference's website at www.nccbuscc.org. If the bishops' declarations are true, then Jesus erred or lied when He said:

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6).

Who is in error: The Savior or the bishops? Who is a liar: The Savior or the bishops? The apostle John said:

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?...Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 Jn. 2:22-23).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jn. 9).

According to the inspired record, the Jews who do not believe in Christ have neither the Father, nor the Son, so in what way can it be said that they "do not need to convert to Christianity to be saved?"

We point out these things with no animosity for either Catholic or Jew. We bring these things to your attention to show how far some have erred from the truth of God's word. Jesus told the Jews (and indeed all mankind) that if they fail to believe on the Son of God, they "shall die in (their) sins" (Jn. 3:18, 36; 8:24; 14:6). Unlike the Catholic Bishops, we must not abandon the truth and teach falsehood. Let us openly and frankly declare to the Jews (and to all men) exactly what the Savior said to them, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (Jn. 5:23). Our desire should be the same as God's, that "all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). However, salvation can be found only in Jesus Christ, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36).

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CHANGES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

John Isaac Edwards

In my possession is a copy of *Noah Webster's First Edition Of An American Dictionary Of The English Language*. Mr. Webster considered "education useless without the Bible." In his view, "the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed...No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people..."

Dictionaries define words as they are commonly used among people. As a people's values change, we may expect their language to change. Such is indeed the case, as evidenced by changes in the English language. Consider a few examples:

1) **THE WORD "MARRIAGE."** A modern dictionary might define "marriage" in this manner: "The legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. The state of being married; wedlock. A common-law marriage. A union between two persons having the customary but usually not the legal force of marriage." Compare with this the definition of the 1828 Webster Dictionary: "The act of uniting a man and a woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and a woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God Himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children."

In the first definition, mention of the religious side of marriage, or reference to the union being lifelong, is wanting. Additionally, the last sentence, in the first definition, does not specify the union of man and woman. Today, the union may be that of man and man or of two women. This was not the case in 1828, nor was it the case in Bible days. "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mt. 19:4-6).

2) **THE WORD "SIN."** You may find a definition of sin, in a modern dictionary, as follows: "The act of breaking a religious or moral law. An offense, error, or fault." Now observe the definition of the 1828 Webster Dictionary: "The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule or rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity. Sin is either a positive act in which a known divine law is violated, or it is the voluntary neglect to obey a positive divine command, or a rule of duty clearly implied in such command. Sin comprehends not actions only, but whatever is contrary to God's commands or law."

We seldom hear the word "sin" anymore, and when we do, it is used in a light that is completely foreign to the Bible. It would not surprise me, if someday the word "sin" is omitted from the English dictionary, as we have just about

whitewashed sin out of our vocabulary. Even though attitudes toward sin may have changed, sin is still what it has always been and will do what it has always done! Sin “is the transgression of law” (1 Jn. 3:4), and “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

3) **THE WORD “LAW.”** A modern dictionary may define law as: “A binding custom or practice of a community: a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority.” In the Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary, law is defined in this way: “A rule, particularly an established or permanent rule, prescribed by the supreme power of a state to its subjects, for regulating their actions, particularly their social actions. Laws are imperative or mandatory, commanding what shall be done; prohibitory, restraining from what is to be forborne; or permissive, declaring what may be done without incurring a penalty. The laws which enjoin the duties of piety and morality, are prescribed by God and found in the Scriptures.”

Have you noticed the shift in thinking toward law? The latter definition views law as objective, while the former renders law subjective in nature. We have a growing disrespect and disregard for the rule of law today.

Many look upon laws as being merely suggestive and not regulatory or mandatory. Only when we are made to respect the laws of God will we have respect for the laws of the land. We should not expect attitudes toward civil law to improve until attitudes toward divine law are made better.

Of course, there are some words in the modern dictionaries not found in the 1828 dictionary, as new discoveries, inventions and experiences bring new words. You will not find “automobile,” “internet,” “telephone,” “velcro” or “zipper” in Webster’s first dictionary. There are words to which new meanings have been ascribed as well, like the words “gay” or “swing.” Noah Webster thought the word “swing” meant “Motion from one side to the other. A line, cord or other thing suspended and hanging loose; also, an apparatus suspended for persons to swing in.” Today, we may hear people talk about “swinging,” and they are not talking about sitting out on the front porch! The children of the devil have taken perfectly good words and completely perverted them after their corrupt and deviant ways. These changes in the English language show the degeneration and digression of the American people, and the pressing need for us to call men back to basic Bible teaching.

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It is the work of the church to sound out the word of the Lord (1 Th. 1:8). The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). As a means of taking the gospel to those in the local community, we offer to customize each issue of *Back To Basics*, with the information of the local church (name, address, picture, time of services, etc.), work with you in compiling a mailing list, and send directly to those in your community. If you would like to do a one-time mass mailing, we have material that fills that need as well. The cost is just \$1.00 per issue, plus a flat fee of \$25.00 each mailing, regardless of how many copies are sent, to cover the cost of the plate change on the printing press. For example, if you would like us to send *Back To Basics* to 200 people in your community, the cost is only \$225. Contact us today, if you are interested in taking advantage of this service.

RUNNING THE RACE

Todd Williams

There are very few that have run in the Olympics, and even fewer have won Olympic races. Every four years, the world marvels at these amazing athletes, and wonder what it takes for these men and women to be champions. For a Christian, that is a valuable thing to ponder. The Lord's people need to take lessons from these competitors, because the Hebrew writer says that we must "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). Let us consider what is mandatory to running the race.

1) **PREPARATION.** No one has ever been a world champion without devoting most of their life to preparing for that race. In order for us to compete, we too must prepare. We are told in Hebrews 5:13-14 that the only way we can get stronger is to graduate from partaking of the milk intended for babes and partake of the solid food. For us to be approved by God to run the race, we must be diligent in our study as Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15. Training is not easy, but its rewards are gratifying (Heb. 12:11).

2) **FOCUS.** Before a race, it is apparent that the competitors are focused on what they are about to do. Hebrews 12:1-2 says that we must "lay aside every encumbrance," and "fix our eyes on Jesus." Without focusing on Jesus, it is impossible to run a successful race.

3) **COMPLETE EFFORT.** How strange it would be to see a world class athlete run, giving less than their best! We must not forget that we

are racing; we are not out for a fun jog. Running a successful race requires giving everything we have. Loving and serving the Lord demands that we give ALL our heart, soul, and mind (Mt.22:37).

4) **STAYING ON COURSE.** When was the last time you saw an Olympic champion veer from the inside lane to the outside line? In order to win, we must stay on course. There is only one way to the finish line (Jn. 14:6; Gal. 1:6-7). If we do not take the way of the Lord, the way we take will lead to destruction (Mt. 7:13-14).

5) **FINISH THE RACE.** In a mile race, the reward is not given to the athlete in first place after the first 100 meters, but it is given to the first athlete to complete the whole mile. God is not going to give us the reward before the race is over. We must "be faithful unto death" in order to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). May we be as Paul and finish the course (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Paul said, "Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

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HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

Irvin Himmel

No hitchhiking is permitted on the highway to heaven.

The way to eternal life is restricted and narrow. Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14).

There are no alternate routes to heaven. Neither Mohammed, nor Buddha, nor the Pope of Rome, nor Joseph Smith, Jr., nor Mary Baker Eddy is a way to the heavenly Father. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). All who travel in this heavenly way must enter Christ.

The way to heaven demands holiness. Isaiah prophesied, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it..." (Is. 35:8). When one is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), his sins are remitted (Acts 2:38). As he travels the way leading to heaven, he must put away sin. He is admonished to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

Many warning signs are posted along the way. We are warned not to turn back, not to turn aside, and to keep our attention on the goal. It is possible for one to "swerve" and "turn aside" (1 Tim. 1:6). Some "turn aside after Satan" (1 Tim. 5:15). Many of Christ's disciples "went back, and walked no more with him" (Jn. 6:66). De-

spite all the "take heed" signs and "beware" warnings, some who enter the way leading heavenward fail to complete the journey.

All who travel the road to heaven must avoid being fooled by the devil's detours. His ways are attractive, appealing, and alluring. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Some take a detour in the quest for riches. Some turn aside after prestige. Some head off in the direction of sinful pleasures. Others are rerouted by false doctrines which make vain promises. And there are people who look for shortcuts. Satan may persuade some that they can bypass hardships, persecutions, and trials. The detour they take is supposed to be the easy way, but its destination is not heaven.

The highway to heaven is clearly mapped out in the holy Scriptures. The Bible is our guide to be consulted daily. It shows us how to get into the way, how to proceed, and how to get back on the road if we make a wrong turn.

If you are on the highway to heaven, go straight ahead. It is hazardous to look back.

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Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Great Men Of The Old Testament

Read Hebrews 11 to identify some of the great men of the Old Testament. Find their names in the word puzzle below.

_____ did not see death.

_____ blessed Jacob and Esau.

_____ chose to suffer affliction.

_____ offered a more excellent sacrifice than his brother.

_____ offered up Isaac.

_____ gave commandment concerning his bones.

_____ prepared an ark.

_____ was a king of Israel.



Why should we study the Old Testament? Read Romans 15:4 and write your answer below.

***"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).***

CHURCH CHOIRS

Aaron Erhardt

The New Testament instructs us to sing. Just as God specified that “gopher” was the wood He desired for the ark (Gen. 6:14), He specified that “singing” was the music He desired for the church (Col. 3:16). This excludes every other kind of music.

The singing of the church should be congregational. It is to be a reciprocal action, meaning that everyone participates in the song service. Paul wrote:

“Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19, ASV).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16, ASV).

The terms “one to another” and “one another” are grammatically classified as reciprocal pronouns. They represent an interchange of action.

Appropriate Questions

What passage authorizes the church to have a choir or special singing group? Is there such a passage?

Who is selected for the special singing groups? Those who have the most talent singing? If so, is that fair to the other members?

Who is in charge of selecting the singers? Is it the responsibility of the elders or someone else?

Will the group perform in front of the congregation? If so, can women participate?

Is this not engaging in worship by proxy? If the church can employ a special group to sing for others, can it employ a special group to commune for others too? If not, why not?

In order to please God, we must have authority (Mt. 7:21-23; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Jn. 9). The New Testament only authorizes congregational singing!

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“Blessed Is He That Readeth”

Daily Bible Reading Schedule For September

Day	Morning	Evening
1	Ps. 148-150	1 Cor. 11:16-34
2	Prov. 1-2	1 Cor. 12
3	Prov. 3-4	1 Cor. 13
4	Prov. 5-6	1 Cor. 14:1-20
5	Prov. 7-8	1 Cor. 14:21-40
6	Prov. 9-10	1 Cor. 15:1-32
7	Prov. 11-12	1 Cor. 15:33-58
8	Prov. 13-14	1 Cor. 16
9	Prov. 15-16	2 Cor. 1
10	Prov. 17-18	2 Cor. 2
11	Prov. 19-20	2 Cor. 3
12	Prov. 21-22	2 Cor. 4
13	Prov. 23-24	2 Cor. 5
14	Prov. 25-27	2 Cor. 6
15	Prov. 28-29	2 Cor. 7
16	Prov. 30-31	2 Cor. 8
17	Ecl. 1-3	2 Cor. 9
18	Ecl. 4-6	2 Cor. 10
19	Ecl. 7-9	2 Cor. 11:1-15
20	Ecl. 10-12	2 Cor. 11:16-33
21	Song 1-3	2 Cor. 12
22	Song 4-5	2 Cor. 13
23	Song 6-8	Gal. 1
24	Is. 1-3	Gal. 2
25	Is. 4-6	Gal. 3
26	Is. 7-9	Gal. 4
27	Is. 10-12	Gal. 5
28	Is. 13-15	Gal. 6
29	Is. 16-18	Eph. 1
30	Is. 19-21	Eph. 2

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