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CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

1ST QUARTER 2020



Kings and Prophets

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cornerstone connections

REAL. SOLID. STORIES.

1st Quarter 2020
Kings and Prophets

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a word about what's ahead...

The goal of *Cornerstone Connections* is to lead you to the Bible to see the big story of God and people. This big story continues from the first generation in Eden to your generation today. It's about the lives of people as the God of the universe interacts with them.

If you are looking for a word from God that is **real**, *Cornerstone Connections* captures the message of Scripture and challenges you to make the connections to your real life.

God's Word is not only real; it is rock-**solid**. For the first generation to hear God's voice in the garden as well as the last group standing before Christ at the Second Coming, the Word of God has been and continues to be reliable.

The word from God comes to us in the **stories** of people who encountered Him and made a decision to either follow Him or walk away.

Real. Solid. Stories. You will find one in *Into the Story* in each lesson. *Out of the Story* will provide you with ways to search for truth you can apply to your life. In each lesson you will also find:

- **What Do You Think?**—a mental activity to get your mind and heart in gear for the story to follow. Every time you approach a Bible story, you are coming to it in the context of the story in which you live every day.
- **Did You Know?**—a brief statistic or definition that digs a little deeper into the story or simply provides some helpful facts to bring to the lesson.
- **Key Text**—a verse that points out a key concept from the story. It is also a great place to find verses that you can memorize and store away for later use.
- **Punch Lines**—a few other verses from Scripture that punctuate key concepts of the lesson. You may see connections between them and the Bible story as well as your own life.
- **Flashlight**—a brief snapshot of Ellen White's input on the story. These glimmers that shed light onto the biblical passage will also give you a glimpse of what awaits you in the suggested weekly reading from her inspired commentary on the stories—the Conflict of the Ages.*
- **Further Insight**—one or two quotes that will provide further insight into the central message of the lesson.
- **Connecting to Life**—the guide to making the truths about God in this story your very own. Study the Bible lesson during the week in preparation for Sabbath School. On Sabbath you will have the opportunity to review, discuss, and elaborate on what you learned with your teacher and other students in your Sabbath School class. Each day of the week you will be directed to explore one of the sections of the lesson, to relate it to the story you live, and to make the message from God apply to you personally.

Welcome to *Cornerstone Connections*.
—The Editors

PS: Don't forget to check out the reading plan.

*A special adaptation has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

1ST QUARTER 2020

January

4—An Undelivered Gift [p. 5]

God sends a message to Israel through the final words of Moses, expressing His anger at their refusal to be the blessing to all the nations that He called and empowered them to be.

11—Wise Beyond His Years [p. 9]

Solomon's reign is remarkable not only for Israel's peace with its neighbors, but also for its peace within.

18—A House for God [p. 13]

Solomon's spiritual high point is the building and dedication of a permanent place for God's presence among His people.

25—The Wise and Foolish King [p. 17]

Among the many lessons to be learned from the life of Solomon is the important one about the dangers of unfettered prosperity.

February

1—Confessions of a Foolish Wise Man [p. 21]

In the end of Solomon's life he confesses that only God can fulfill the deepest desires of the soul.

8—Idol Threats [p. 25]

The story of Rehoboam is a sobering reminder that idolatry—in any form—will not be tolerated by God.

15—Jeroboam Sin-drome [p. 29]

The life of Jeroboam is a classic case study of what happens when someone refuses to follow God's leading.

22—Crossroads [p. 33]

Although King Asa's legacy is not free from failure, he nevertheless distinguished himself as a committed follower of God.

29—Never Alone [p. 37]

Elijah, a normal human being, chose to go against the flow of the culture around him and stand up for what he believed in.

March

7—Faith on the Mountaintop [p. 41]

Elijah's "extreme" faith seems far removed from everyday reality; however, his absolute trust in God is exactly what is needed in the days ahead.

14—Doubt in the Valley [p. 45]

God's followers will face times of discouragement and despair; however, His Word is full of helpful guidance for these down times.

21—Who's Counting? [p. 49]

Taking a stand for Christ is a challenge when it is a call to live differently from all those around. However, God finds ways to speak hope and clarity into our lives.

28—Life Sentence [p. 53]

King Jehoshaphat's story is about someone who sought to do what was right in God's eyes. That desire earned him a special sentence of affirmation in the Bible.

Kings and Prophets

FIRST QUARTER 2020



Youth Sabbath School
Bible Study Guide



EYQ200101



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 04 2020

Scripture Story: Deuteronomy 32.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), Introduction.

an undelivered gift



Photo Getty Images

flashlight

"Through the chosen nation, God had purposed to bring blessing to all mankind. . . . They were hedged about by the precepts of His law, the everlasting principles of truth, justice, and purity. Obedience to these principles was to be their protection, for it would save them from destroying themselves by sinful practices. . . . Christ was their instructor. . . . In the tabernacle and the temple His glory dwelt in the holy Shekinah above the mercy seat. In their behalf He constantly manifested the riches of His love and patience" (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 17, 18).

keytext

"For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance."

(Deuteronomy 32:9, NIV)

what do you think?

What would be the best thing you could think of as a gift for your 18th birthday?

- ☐ A computer
- ☐ Clothes
- ☐ A cell phone
- ☐ Something else _____

did you know?

There has always been a difference of opinion about how many Israelites came out of Egypt. The confusion comes from the way you translate one of the Hebrew letters! Why is this important? The children of Israel had been told to take possession of the Promised Land. The only problem with this was that they were not the only people living there! So the question of how many people came out of Egypt becomes important since they had to fight their way through the Promised Land that was already occupied by others. They could have been as few as 3,000 to 5,000 people or perhaps as many as a million or so. Regardless of how many people there were supposed to be, they were expected to be the Lord's gift to the nations.

How could they have done that in the midst of trying to conquer a territory? They could have accomplished it by continually following the Word of God, much the same as we are called to do.

INTO THE STORY

"The Lord alone led him; no foreign god was with him.

"He made him ride on the heights of the land and fed him with the fruit of the fields.

"He nourished him with honey from the rock, and with oil from the flinty crag. . . .

"The Lord saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters.

" 'I will hide my face from them,' he said, 'and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.

" 'They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols.

" 'I will make them envious by those who are not

a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.' . . .

"Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, 'Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.'

"On that same day the Lord told Moses, 'Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel.' "

(Deuteronomy 32:12, 13, 19–21, 44–52, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What is God's attitude toward His "chosen" people at this point?

Why was Moses not allowed into the Promised Land?

Do you think it was fair of God to keep Moses out? Explain.

What does it mean when God says that He is a "jealous" God?

What reason did God have to be angry with the Israelites?

Why do you think Moses said, "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess" (verse 47)?

punch lines

"For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign LORD, brought our ancestors out of Egypt" (1 Kings 8:53, NIV).

"Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name" (2 Samuel 22:50, NIV).

"LORD, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you" (2 Chronicles 20:6, NIV).

"In that day you will say: 'Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted' " (Isaiah 12:4, NIV).

"Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession" (Psalm 2:8, NIV).

"And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign LORD" (Ezekiel 16:14, NIV).

further insight

"Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling his promise."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 164.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read 1 Kings 8:53.

After having completed the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section at the beginning of this lesson, you must have some thoughts about gifts. In our biblical passage for this week we realize that God meant for Israel to be the salvation of the nations. But they thought only of themselves as receiving the gift of a homeland from God. They did not understand the gift they were to be to the rest of the world. They were to exemplify God's character on the earth for the world to see. Unfortunately, they were continually trying to be like the world rather than an example to it. Have you ever made that mistake? How can you better reflect God's character to those around you?

Sunday

Read Deuteronomy 32:46, 47.

Most of Deuteronomy 32 is a type of song or poem for the children of Israel to understand what God is thinking about them at that particular time.

However, Moses placed great importance on verses 46 and 47 for Joshua and the children of Israel. If someone gave you those same words, how could you apply them to your life? How would you be different than the children of Israel? What would cause you to take to heart the words in this text as if they were meant for you?

Monday

Read Deuteronomy 32:9.

What do you think the verse for today and this week's *Key Text* means? Could it mean that God blesses the world through His people? Could it mean that the only way the world will really get to know God is through the inheritance (or legacy) God gives to those

who choose to follow Him? If that is the case, what does that mean for you? Are you God's inheritance? Are you the one who is supposed to bless the world for God? How might you go about doing that?

Tuesday

Read Psalms 2:8.

In the *Flashlight* section we see that Israel had a responsibility to be the character of God for the nations surrounding Israel. Could God say the same thing to you? Would you be comfortable with that responsibility? Could you be the face that has to show the world who Jesus Christ is? Do you look different or the same as the world around you? Does anyone know you are a Christian? How would they know? What does being a blessing to those around you really mean?

Wednesday

Read 2 Samuel 22:50.

In the *Punch Lines* section of the lesson we see many different texts all alluding to the same thing, that Israel was to be a blessing to the nations. The text that best sums up this concept is found in today's Bible reading. This is the theme of all the Scriptures quoted. It seems that this is spoken of a great deal in both the Old and New Testaments. In the New Testament we call this "evangelism." Write down all the things you think of when you hear the word "evangelism."

How can you see yourself "evangelizing"?

Thursday

Read Ezekiel 16:14.

Being a blessing to those around you takes a serious bit of intent and intentionality. What are you doing today and every day that brings you closer to being that blessing to those in your life?

Make a list of five things that you can do to be a blessing to those in your sphere of influence:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Friday

Read Deuteronomy 32.

Much of Deuteronomy is a serious rebuke of the Israelites by the God they were to love. Read this passage as if it was written directly to you. Replacing pronouns directed to the audience with your name. How meaningful is the text when you look at it as if it is a note written directly to you? Pretty powerful stuff! If you were going to write a response to the person (or God) who wrote this note to you, what would you say? Write that note out and keep it in your Bible as a bookmark in Deuteronomy 32.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), Introduction.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URlhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 11 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 3; 4; 10.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 1.

wise beyond his years



Photo Getty Images

flashlight

"The language used by Solomon while praying to God before the ancient altar at Gibeon reveals his humility and his strong desire to honor God. He realized that without divine aid he was as helpless as a little child to fulfill the responsibilities resting on him. He knew that he lacked discernment, and it was a sense of his great need that led him to seek God for wisdom. In his heart there was no selfish aspiration for a knowledge that would exalt him above others. . . . Solomon was never so rich or so wise or so truly great as when he confessed, 'I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in' " (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 30).

keytext

"I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings."

(1 Kings 3:12, 13, NIV)

what do you think?

Which of the following proverbs do you think people struggle with more? Which ones might you struggle with?

1. "Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways" (Proverbs 3:31, NIV).
2. "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (Proverbs 3:11, 12, NIV).
3. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1, NIV).
4. "Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues" (Proverbs 17:28, NIV).

did you know?

Archaeological discoveries have confirmed the existence of such later kings as Ahab and Hezekiah. Yet little archaeological evidence of Solomon's reign has been discovered (though areas such as the likely site of Solomon's temple have not been thoroughly excavated). Solomon's story includes about the only biblical reference to any seafaring on the part of Israel.

The book of Kings credits Solomon with some 3,000 proverbs, though only a few are preserved in the Bible, and many of the Bible's proverbs are credited to others, such as the mother of King Lemuel, an otherwise unknown ruler. The proverbs are grouped into sayings such as "Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked" (Proverbs 10:6, NIV) and advice such as "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness" (Proverbs 23:4, NIV).

INTO THE STORY

"Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

"The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, 'Ask for whatever you want me to give you.'

"Solomon answered, 'You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

" 'Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?'

"The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, 'Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.' Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream.

"He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court."

"The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy."

(1 Kings 3:3–15; 4:20, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Solomon asked God for wisdom, and what he hadn't asked for—riches and glory—were added as well. What do you think might have happened if he'd asked God for material things instead of wisdom?

God blessed Solomon's reign with wealth, yet many of his proverbs warn against the dangers of riches. Are financial blessings necessarily a sign of God's favor for His followers today? How should we relate to money as Christians?

Solomon was fascinated by all kinds of science and natural things. What can the natural world tell us about God? (See Psalm 33:5 for one idea.)

After Solomon returned to Jerusalem, he threw a party for his people! What does this say to you about the role of celebration in the Christian life?

How would you define "wisdom"? How is it a "tree of life" as Proverbs describes?

punch lines

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (**Proverbs 1:7, NIV**).

"For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (**Proverbs 2:6, NIV**).

"Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding" (**Proverbs 4:6, 7, NIV**).

"Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor" (**Proverbs 15:33, NIV**).

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (**Matthew 6:33, NIV**).

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (**James 1:5, NIV**).

further insight

"Those who today occupy positions of trust should seek to learn the lesson taught by Solomon's prayer. The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility that he has to bear, the wider will be the influence that he exerts and the greater his need of dependence on God."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 30.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Proverbs 15:33.

This week's *What Do You Think?* looks at some words of wisdom from Proverbs. Today's reading from Proverbs states: "Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor" (Proverbs 15:33, NIV). How does devotion to God develop wisdom? What's the relationship between humility and wisdom?

Sunday

Read 1 Kings 4:29–30.

The book of 1 Kings describes Solomon as both wise and intelligent, curious about everything around him. Though God doesn't guarantee us material wealth if we follow Him, life usually works better, and we can spare ourselves much pain when we follow God's principles.

Read this week's *Out of the Story*. What are some ways we can become more wise? How do we tell the difference between wisdom and foolishness? In what situations is wisdom particularly necessary?

Monday

Read Proverbs 9:10.

This week's *Key Text* is God's promise to Solomon after he asked for wisdom above anything else God could offer. If someone looked at your priorities, what would they think is most important to you? Do your actions live up to what you believe in? If "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10), how can you make following God more central in your life?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 23:11, 12.

This week's *Flashlight* quotation addresses the idea of true greatness. Today, as throughout history, people think greatness means possessions, power, or personality. We imagine greatness to mean the clothes we wear, the car we drive, the home we live in, the money we make, the influence we wield, or the attention we command. Solomon's story reminds us, however, that true greatness is rooted in selflessness.

Solomon's number one goal was to serve his people. Looking back at how Israel's two previous kings had tripped over their own importance, forgetting their obligations to God and citizens, Solomon knew that ruling a troubled nation was too great to handle on his own. With such a humble heart, Solomon became the greatest of earthly kings. It was only as he forgot his commitment to God that things began to fall apart.

Jesus came to show us how to serve others, telling us that whatever kindness we do for someone in need, we're doing for Him. Everything we do should be for God's glory—but that requires humility. How can we keep the perspective in today's Bible verses in our everyday lives?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 2:6–8; 4:6, 7.

Have you ever faced a situation through which you knew you couldn't make it without God's help? If so, how did God make the difference for you?

How does the picture of God in today's Bible verses make you feel? When you look at the tragedies in the world around you, affecting even faithful Christians, do you feel as if God is as trustworthy as these verses describe? How can you reconcile such a Bible promise with the reality that God allows bad things to happen to

some of the best people?

The book of Proverbs sometimes personifies wisdom as someone with whom the reader can have a protective relationship. What does this tell you about how ancient cultures valued wisdom?

Thursday

Read Luke 14:7–14.

Solomon described himself as like "a small child" as he faced the enormous challenge of becoming king. Is it possible to be too humble? What role does self-confidence play in a successful life? How does someone balance self-confidence and humility? In what ways is it important for us to be self-confident? In what ways is it important for us to be humble?

How might true humility affect our career and social standing?

Friday

Read James 1:5.

Think of someone you know whom you would describe as wise. Why do you think they are? What situations have they handled particularly wisely? What can you learn from their life that can help you to make wise decisions? How does asking God for wisdom help us in line with today's Bible passage?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 1.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#UR1hF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 18 2020

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 5:2–14.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 2.

a house for God



Photo by Jennifer and Company

flashlight

"In bringing to the temple the sacred ark containing the two tables of stone on which were written by the finger of God the precepts of the Decalogue, Solomon had followed the example of his father David. Every six paces he sacrificed. With singing and with music and with great ceremony, 'the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place' " (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 38).

keytext

"The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: 'He is good; his love endures forever.' Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud."

(2 Chronicles 5:13, NIV)

what do you think?

Which of the following places would you choose as your spot, your special place to meet and talk with God?

1. Your room
2. Beside a lake
3. A park
4. On a bench downtown in the city
5. In the woods
6. In your church sanctuary

Share what place you chose and why. What's special about your spot with God?

did you know?

The building of the Lord's temple was no small undertaking. Solomon conscripted 30,000 Israelite men to work in Lebanon. He had 70,000 men to carry materials and 80,000 dedicated to cutting out the best stones in the nearby hills. He needed 3,300 foremen to oversee the work. In spite of the fact that Solomon had many workers, the building of the temple still took seven years to finish.

INTO THE STORY

"Then Solomon summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David. And all the Israelites came together to the king at the time of the festival in the seventh month.

"When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the Levites took up the ark, and they brought up the ark and the tent of meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The Levitical priests carried them up; and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted.

"The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner

sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and covered the ark and its carrying poles. These poles were so long that their ends, extending from the ark, could be seen from in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

"The priests then withdrew from the Holy Place. All the priests who were there had consecrated themselves, regardless of their divisions. All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang:

" 'He is good; his love endures forever.'

"Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God."

(2 Chronicles 5:2-14, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What aspects of this Scripture story are new to you?

Draw a *rectangle* around the “minor characters” in the story.

Circle the person who is the main focus of the passage.

What does this passage say to you about the importance and meaning of worship?

What role did music play in the ceremony?

What role did the ark of the covenant play in the dedication ceremony?

The priests sanctified themselves for this ceremony. What does this mean? Does this apply to us? (See 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23; John 17:17–19; 1 Peter 1:2.)

punch lines

“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (**Revelation 14:6, 7, NIV**).

“**Lord, I love the house** where you live, the place where your glory dwells” (**Psalms 26:8, NIV**).

“**Jesus said to him**, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only” ’ ” (**Matthew 4:10, NIV**).

“**Do not make idols** or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God” (**Leviticus 26:1, NIV**).

further insight

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence.”—Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up*, p. 51.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 5:2-6.

In the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson you were asked to choose a place from the list provided where you and God could meet together. Besides the obvious physical differences between the temple that Solomon built for God and dedicated with an elaborate ceremony and the place you have set aside to talk with God, what similarities do you see between the two places? What differences?

Similarities: _____

Differences: _____

What do you think made the temple Solomon constructed special? How can you make your place of worship to God special?

Sunday

Read Psalm 95:1, 2.

Read carefully the *Into the Story* passage selected. Now complete the *Out of the Story* questions given. One of the questions referred to the role that music plays in worship.

In today's lesson passage, who did the singing during the ceremony?

What instruments were played?

Think about the music that accompanies the worship in your church. Do you feel that it enhances or detracts from the worship experience? Explain.

The song sung at the temple dedication was

fairly simple by today's standards. What happened when these simple words were sung?

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 5:13.

This week's *Key Text* is one of the most powerful in all of Scripture. It tells us that the glory of God filled the temple, so much so that the priests could not enter it. There are services throughout Scripture that are holy and exalted, yet God never made His glory visible in them.

Why did God choose to make His presence visible during the dedication of Solomon's temple? What do you think moved Him to do so?

What can you do to attract God's presence to your life?

Tuesday

Read 2 Chronicles 6:11.

This week's *Flashlight* shines on an often overlooked part of the dedication ceremony for the Jerusalem temple: the ark of God.

The ark held the two tables of stone given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. On them were written the Ten Commandments.

What do you think was the purpose of stopping every six paces to offer sacrifices to God before the ark? What was Solomon trying to say to God through this practice?

Wednesday

Read this week's *Punch Lines*, paying close attention to Psalm 26:8. King David expresses his love for God's house in a fit of raw emotion. This is no doubt where Solomon developed his passion for worshipping God.

If you love God's house—your church—what can you do to make it better? How might you improve it?

Thursday

Read John 4:24.

Worship to God is both a personal experience and a corporate experience. There is something special about worshipping God with people who share a love for God and a desire to live for Him.

How can you help people who are sick and cannot get to church experience the joy of corporate worship? Why not gather some friends together and plan a worship service at the home of a sick member?

Friday

Read Leviticus 26:1.

Believe it or not, God wants His glory to be seen in your life, just as it was seen during Solomon's special dedication of the temple. What can you do to build a place in your life for God? What would you have to give up? What music sacrifices would you offer?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 2.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#_UR1hF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 25 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 11.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 3; 4.

the wise and foolish king



Photo by Jacqui Janetzko

flashlight

"Had Solomon continued in humility of mind to turn the attention of men from himself to the One who had given him wisdom and riches and honor, what a history might have been his! But while the pen of inspiration records his virtues, it also bears faithful witness to his downfall. Raised to a pinnacle of greatness and surrounded with the gifts of fortune, Solomon became dizzy, lost his balance, and fell" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 68).

keytext

"The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command."

(1 Kings 11:9, 10, NIV)

what do you think?

Imagine that your parents are going to take one of the following items away from you. On a scale from 1 ("Gotta have it") to 4 ("No sweat without it"), rank the items in order of importance to you.

- Money
- Cell phone
- Internet access
- Freedom to hang out with friends

did you know?

Did you know that Solomon built temples for the worship of heathen gods in addition to the temple he built for the true God? What's more, he didn't just build them in some obscure place, safely out of sight; He built them on a hillside opposite Mount Moriah, the exact spot where he had built a magnificent temple for God (see *Prophets and Kings*, p. 57).

INTO THE STORY

"King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, 'You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.' Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely,

as David his father had done.

"On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

"The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. So the LORD said to Solomon, 'Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.' "

(1 Kings 11:1–13, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What parts of this passage are most striking to you?

What parts of the story are new to you?

Who is the main character of this Scripture?

Circle some of the other characters playing a role in this passage?

Underline what you believe is the main point of the passage.

Number each portion of the passage where you see an important lesson to be learned.

In spite of David's sin with Bathsheba, this passage says that David "followed God completely." What does this tell us about what God values in His children?

What does this passage say to you about self-discipline in the choice of a life partner? How can that choice influence our relationship with God?

What are some biblical examples of people who made wise decisions in their choice of a life partner?

punch lines

"Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression" (**Psalms 19:13, NIV**).

"I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens" (**Ezra 9:6, NIV**).

"The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: 'Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets' " (**2 Kings 17:13, NIV**).

"But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one" (**2 Thessalonians 3:3, NIV**).

"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways" (**Psalms 25:8, NIV**).

further insight

"He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 30.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read 1 Kings 11:11.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. What item would you most hate for your parents to take from you? Now, think of all the different things that Solomon stood to lose as a result of disobeying God. What would you say is the thing he most hated to lose:

What judgment did God pronounce upon Solomon? If you were Solomon, how would you have reacted to such an awesome statement from God?

Sunday

Read 1 Kings 11:1–13.

Read this week's *Into the Story*. Pay close attention to verse 2. God gave His people what specific command?

What would happen to the people of God if they did not obey this command?

What did Solomon do? How far did he go in breaking God's command?

As the most important earthly figure in all of Israel, how do you think his example impacted the nation?

Monday

Read 1 Kings 11:9, 10.

After careful thought, I am quite sure the wise person would not want to have God angry at them. After all, He is the all-powerful

Creator, and we are created beings. He is the source of our breath, our very life. And yet, according to the *Key Text*, wise King Solomon did the very things that called out God's righteous anger.

Read the *Key Text* closely. Why did God become angry with Solomon? The Bible says that Solomon's heart "had turned away from the LORD." In your own words, write what you think God was saying here:

Is it possible for your heart to be turned away from God, even though you are a Christian?

Tuesday

Read Ezra 9:6.

Read this week's *Flashlight*. Ellen White says that Solomon became dizzy, lost his balance, and fell. Explain what you believe she means by these statements.

Solomon became dizzy:

Lost his balance:

Fell:

Wednesday

Read Matthew 12:31, 32.

Check out the *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson. Does the sorrow for sin catch your attention in Ezra 9:6? What about the promise of protection in 2 Thessalonians 3:3?

What do you think is the "great transgression" or sin that David was afraid of in Psalm 19:13? What do you think continued willful disobedience and rejecting the guidance of God's Holy Spirit leads us to?

Thursday

Read Proverbs 12:4.

Most people who read the life of Solomon focus on the number of wives (700) and concubines (300) that he had. But the numbers are not of utmost importance. It is the impact that they had on his worship and allegiance to God that was most unfortunate.

What does this say to you about the importance of your choice of a boyfriend/girlfriend or life partner and how it impacts your relationship with God?

Friday

Read 2 Kings 17:13.

We can be fairly certain that God did much to warn Solomon to change his behavior. Is God warning you to change something in your life before it's too late? What might that be? Why not surrender it to God right now in prayer? Ask Him to make you willing to be made willing to have Him take it from you.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 3; 4.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#UR1hF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 01 2020

Scripture Story: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 5.

confessions of a foolish wise man



Photo by Jacqui Janetzko

flashlight

"By his own bitter experience, Solomon learned the emptiness of a life that seeks in earthly things its highest good. . . . Yet the Lord forsook him not. By messages of reproof and by severe judgments, He sought to arouse the king to a realization of the sinfulness of his course" (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 76, 77).

"Solomon's repentance was sincere; but the harm that his example of evil-doing had wrought could not be undone. . . . Though the king confessed his sin and wrote out for the benefit of after generations a record of his folly and repentance, he could never hope entirely to destroy the baleful influence of his wrong deeds" (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 84, 85).

keytext

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.' "

(Ecclesiastes 12:1, NIV)

what do you think?

Number from 1 (meaning it's the most important reason)

to 10 (the least important reason) why you think people find confession and repentance difficult to do.

- _____ They don't believe they'll be able to stop committing the sin.
- _____ They're afraid of what others might think.
- _____ They feel guilty for what they did.
- _____ They don't want to feel humiliated.
- _____ They fear being viewed as hypocrites.
- _____ They're afraid of punishment.
- _____ They don't feel the Bible teaches that confession and repentance are all that important.
- _____ They don't want to stop doing what they're doing.

Which of the following individuals do you think is the most prideful? Why?

- _____ Josh is constantly showing off his latest electronic toys.
- _____ Lawrence ignores his friends when a cute girl walks by.
- _____ Rebecca keeps reminding you that she has a 4.0 grade point average.
- _____ Benito constantly bullies other students in the dorm.

did you know?

In 1842 the first bathtub was denounced as a "luxurious and democratic vanity." Boston made it unlawful to bathe, except on doctor's prescription. In 1843 Philadelphia made bathing illegal between November 1 and March 15.

And yet, how many Christians have adopted a similar schedule of spiritual cleansing? Many of us would rather endure the stench of our unconfessed sins than come clean before God!

INTO THE STORY

"God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:29, 30, NIV).

"I said to myself, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.' But that also proved to be meaningless" (Ecclesiastes 2:1, NIV).

"King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon" (1 Kings 10:23, 24, NIV).

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good" (Ecclesiastes 9:18, NIV).

"There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler: Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones" (Ecclesiastes 10:5, 6, NIV).

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'—before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when people rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; when people are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags itself along and desire no longer is stirred. "Then people go to their eternal home and mourners go about the streets.

"Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

" 'Meaningless! Meaningless!' says the Teacher. 'Everything is meaningless! "

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind."

(Ecclesiastes 12:1–8, 13, NIV)

9/20/19 10:45 AM

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read 1 John 1:9, 10.

Read through the *What Do You Think?* section and then reflect on the following questions:

- Which is easier—to confess or conceal wrongdoing? Why?
- What does God think about the practice of confession?
- How can confession bring a person closer to God?
- Why do people try to hide wrongdoing?
- What are the dangers of failing to confess sins?

Compare your answers in the *What Do You Think?* section with that of your friends and discuss:

What is the most common number 1 ranking for failure to confess sin?

What reasons, besides the ones listed, might people give for not practicing confession?

Explain any connection you see between pride and the unwillingness to confess and repent of sin.

Sunday

Read 1 Kings 10:23, 24.

Review the Bible verses that describe Solomon's quest for meaning by pursuing wisdom, pleasure, and wealth. Why do you think these pursuits failed to quiet the innermost longings of his soul?

What things of the world are you pursuing that are failing to fill the innermost longing of your soul?

Monday

Read Ecclesiastes 12.

Review the *Key Text* for this lesson. What does it mean for you to "remember your Creator"? Solomon urges you to do this before you get old. He gives some very vivid and colorful illustrations of getting old. Draw lines to match the words of Solomon to the aging ailment that he is describ-

Words of Solomon	Ailments of Aging
1. "... the grinders cease because they are few"	A. Failing eyesight
2. "... those looking through the windows grow dim"	B. Loss of hearing
3. "... people rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint"	C. Phobias and paranoia
4. "... people are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets"	D. Teeth rot and fall out
5. "... the almond tree blossoms"	E. The get-up-and-go got up and went
6. "... the grasshopper drags itself along and desire no longer is stirred"	F. Death
7. "... the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well"	G. Hair turns gray

ing. Check your answers with the key following.

Answer key: 1-D; 2-A; 3-B; 4-C; 5-G; 6-E; 7-F

Tuesday

Read Matthew 6:24.

The quote in the *Flashlight* section highlights the hard lesson that Solomon learned about "the emptiness of a life that seeks in earthly things its highest good." Pray about how earthly things influence you. Ask a mature Christian about how to not get caught up in the earthly things that many teens are getting caught up in, such as materialism, poor choices of friendship, premarital sex, alcohol, drugs.

What "master" are you serving?

Wednesday

Carefully read the *Punch Lines*. Contained in these verses you will find profound principles for enjoying a better life. Read the texts over and over until you have them deeply entrenched in your mind. Then apply the verses and use them today as an experiment in humbly walking with God.

Thursday

Read Matthew 16:26.

Review the life of Solomon, then ask yourself: *From what aspect of Solomon's story do I need to learn the most?*

Friday

Read Proverbs 16:18, 19.

Ellen White offers this commentary on Solomon's life: "Not only to the youth, but to those of mature years, . . . the life of Solomon is full of warning. We see and hear of unsteadiness in youth, the young wavering between right and wrong, and the current of evil passions proving too strong for them. In those of maturer years, we do not look for this unsteadiness and unfaithfulness; we expect the character to be established, the principles firmly rooted. But this is not always so. . . .

"From such examples we should learn that in watchfulness and prayer is the only safety for both young and old. . . . One may for many years have enjoyed a genuine Christian experience, but he is still exposed to Satan's attacks. In the battle with inward sin and outward temptation, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. His failure teaches us that, whatever a man's intellectual qualities may be, and however faithfully he may have served God in the past, he can never with safety trust in his own wisdom and integrity" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 82).

Questions to consider:

- What is the state of my character?
- Am I watchful and prayerful each day?
- How can I trust in God rather than in my own wisdom and integrity?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 5.

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CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 08 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 11:14–43; 12:1–24; 2 Chronicles 9:29–12:16.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 6.

idol threats



Photo by Bill Wolf

flashlight

"The twelve tribes of Israel were divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin composing the lower or southern kingdom of Judah, under the rulership of Rehoboam; while the ten northern tribes formed and maintained a separate government, known as the kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as their ruler. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet concerning the rending of the kingdom. 'The cause was from the Lord' " (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 91).

"But as time passed, the king put his trust in the power of position and in the strongholds he had fortified. Little by little he gave way to inherited weakness, until he threw his influence wholly on the side of idolatry" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 93).

keytext

"After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel with him abandoned the law of the LORD."

(2 Chronicles 12:1, NIV)

what do you think?

Rank the following items below in order of importance to the

average teenager (1 is most important, 10 is least important).

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good looks | <input type="checkbox"/> A loving family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musical abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Low stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A strong relationship with God | <input type="checkbox"/> Good health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A good reputation | <input type="checkbox"/> A Christlike character |

did you know?

Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonite. Her name means "pleasant" or "sweetness," but her actions against the true God of Israel were abominable. She was one of Solomon's many wives who influenced Solomon toward idolatry. Because she was the first lady of the kingdom, Solomon erected in her honor a statue to her god, Moloch.

Moloch was a god to whom children were often sacrificed. The law given to Moses prohibited the Jews from sacrificing children to Moloch; nevertheless, King Solomon introduced Moloch into Israel. Moloch's shrine was located at a site outside Jerusalem named Gehenna.

Gehenna (first mentioned in the Bible in Joshua

15:8), in Jewish eschatology, is a fiery place where the wicked are punished on judgment day. Originally it referred to a garbage dump in a deep, narrow valley right outside the walls of Jerusalem where fires were kept burning to consume the refuse and keep down the stench. It is also the location where bodies of executed criminals, or individuals denied a proper burial, would be dumped. Gehenna is sometimes translated as "hell."

INTO THE STORY

"Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you. . . .'

"Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, 'Come back to me in three days.' The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, 'My father made y o u r yoke

heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.' "

"So all the Israelites went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

"King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, who was in charge of forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day."

"When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered Judah and Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand able young men—to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam.

"But this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God: 'Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, "This is what the LORD says: Do not go up to fight against your fellow Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing." ' So they obeyed the words of the LORD and turned back from marching against Jeroboam."

"Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD's anger turned from him, and he was not totally destroyed. . . .

"King Rehoboam established himself firmly in Jerusalem and continued as king. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD."

(1 Kings 12:1–4, 12–14; 2 Chronicles 10:16–19; 11:1–4; 12:12–14, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read all of the texts listed in Scripture Story at the beginning of this lesson, and write down the roles played by the following people:

Adoram _____

Shemaiah _____

Hadad _____

Jeroboam _____

Ahijah _____

Shishak _____

Maachah _____

What can we learn from each of these people in Rehoboam's story? With whom do you identify the most? Why?

After reading Rehoboam's story in the Bible, make a graph of his life, indicating those times when he was strong spiritually as well as those times when he experienced great spiritual failure. What can we learn from his experience that can help to strengthen our relationship with the Lord?

punch lines

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other" **(Matthew 6:24, NIV).**

"Why do the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them" **(Psalm 115:2-8, NIV).**

"They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation" **(Deuteronomy 32:21, NKJV).**

further insight

"Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up . . . the love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan . . . the life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such entirely."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 44.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Psalm 16:4.

In the *What Do You Think?* section, you were asked to prioritize what the average teen values the most. Are your personal values any different from what you perceive to be the values of the average teen? If so, in what way?

Review the list, then think about how we can turn any of these things into an idol. What is an idol? Consider the following definitions and then write your own.

i-dol-a-try: "Blind or excessive devotion to something" (*Online American Heritage Dictionary*).

i-dol-a-try: "Anything that comes before God."

My definition: _____

i-dol-a-try: _____

Sunday

After reading the *Into the Story* section, give a title to each of the major portions of Scripture. Next write the primary lesson we can learn from that text.

1 Kings 12:1–4, 12–14

Title: _____

Main lesson to be learned: _____

2 Chronicles 10:16–19; 11:1–4

Title: _____

Main lesson to be learned: _____

2 Chronicles 12:12–14

Title: _____

Main lesson to be learned: _____

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 12:1.

Memorize the *Key Text*. Connect the verse to your spiritual journey by reflecting on the following questions:

When have you felt "strong" in the Lord? What factors led to Rehoboam's collapse? In what ways are you vulnerable to these same temptations?

Rehoboam's spiritual compromise impacted "all Israel." Who might be negatively influenced in your life should you drift away from God?

Rehoboam's downfall came when he "abandoned the law of the Lord." What specific aspects of God's law do you struggle with the most? Why?

Tuesday

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Note the final paragraph in the *Flashlight* section. Rehoboam's spiritual collapse happened "little by little." Identify and then list the "little" compromises that tempt you today. How might these temptations ultimately spell a person's spiritual demise?

Wednesday

Read Matthew 6:24; Exodus 20:3, 4.

In today's reading we're reminded of the words of Jesus: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24, NIV). Write a modern translation of this verse, specifying what "masters" we're tempted to serve today.

Read the verses in Exodus and think about what they are saying. Write them out.

"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill" (Acts 17:29, NIV).

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 3:2–5.

How do you know when something is a high priority to you? Check the top action below that you feel best indicates what someone's most treasured value or object is:

- ____ Spends heaps of money on it.
- ____ Invests a lot of time in it.
- ____ Thinks of it often.
- ____ Talks about it often.
- ____ Has dreams at night about it.

Is there any difference between treasuring something (or someone) and making it an idol? Explain.

Friday

Read James 1:19.

Consider the words of Ellen White in commenting on Rehoboam's influence over the Israelites on page 94 of *Prophets and Kings*. Ask yourself: What kind of influence am I on my friends and family?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 6.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URlhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 15 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 12:16–14:20; 2 Chronicles 13.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 7.

Jeroboam sin-drome



Photo Getty Images

flashlight

“Placed on the throne by the ten tribes of Israel who had rebelled against the house of David, Jeroboam, the former servant of Solomon, was in a position to bring about wise reforms in both civil and religious affairs. Under the rulership of Solomon he had shown aptitude and sound judgment; and the knowledge he had gained during years of faithful service fitted him to rule with discretion. But Jeroboam failed to make God his trust” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 99).

keytext

“Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.”

(1 Kings 13:33, 34, NIV)

what do you think?

Mark each statement T (true) or F (false).

- ☐ What may be a sin for you may or may not be a sin for me.
- ☐ Sin is nothing more than a bad choice.
- ☐ Some sins are worse than others.
- ☐ There are always bad consequences to sin.
- ☐ If we ask forgiveness for our sins, God forgets them forever.
- ☐ If my sin doesn't harm anyone, it's not really a sin.
- ☐ God despises sin, but always loves the sinner.
- ☐ Sin is separation from God.
- ☐ Sin is too often ignored in churches today.

did you know?

First Kings 13:33 records:

"Anyone who wanted to become a priest [Jeroboam] consecrated for the high places" (NIV). This was a grave sin before God. Under penalty of death, God had forbidden anyone outside of the tribe of

Levi to be a priest (see Numbers 3:10). Levites were guaranteed a salary from the tithe. This allowed them

to focus completely on their duties as priests, without having to moonlight in order to survive. In the case of

Jeroboam's priests, they were paid by the king. Thus they had to mix priestly and secular duties; before long they were corrupted by bribes and sold out to the political interests of the king.

INTO THE STORY

"Jeroboam thought to himself, 'The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.'

"After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other."

"By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. . . . That same

day the man of God gave a sign: 'This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.'

"When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, 'Seize him!' But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.

"Then the king said to the man of God, 'Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored.' So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored. . . .

"Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. Their father asked them, 'Which way did he go?' And his sons showed him. . . . He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?'

" 'I am,' he replied.

"So the prophet said to him, 'Come home with me and eat.'

"The man of God said, 'I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the LORD: "You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came."'

"The old prophet answered, 'I too am a prophet. . . .' (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

"While they were sitting

at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, 'This is what the LORD says: "You have defied the word of the LORD. . . . Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors." ' ' "

(1 Kings 12:26-30; 13:1, 3-6, 11-22, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Ellen White refers to three stories in her chapter entitled "Jeroboam." She writes: "In the rent altar, in the palsied arm, and in the terrible fate of the one who dared disobey an express command of Jehovah, Jeroboam should have discerned the swift displeasure of an offended God, and these judgments should have warned him not to persist in wrongdoing" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 107).

Consider these three stories and write the primary lesson we learn from each one.

1. The rent altar _____

2. The palsied arm _____

3. The unnamed prophet who disobeyed God and ate with the false prophet _____

punch lines

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (**Galatians 6:7, 8, NIV**).

"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" (**Ezekiel 11:19, NIV**).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (**1 John 1:7, NIV**).

"If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them" (**James 4:17, NIV**).

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing." (**Luke 13:34, NIV**).

further insight

"You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness. Apart from Him you have no life. You have no power to resist temptation or to grow in grace and holiness."

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 69.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read James 4:17.

Compare your answers in the *What Do You Think?* section with the answers given by a friend. Discuss any differences you may have.

Write your definition of sin: _____

List three sins that teenagers consider to be OK:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sunday

Read 1 Kings 12:26–30, 13:1–6, 11–22.

Review the section *Into the Story* and reflect on the following questions.

- In 1 Kings 12:26–30 Jeroboam had been assured by the prophet Ahijah that God was going to make him king of the ten tribes of Israel. Still, Jeroboam was very insecure about his kingdom. Thus he set up centers of worship in Bethel and Dan to discourage his people from visiting Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah. Do you think Jeroboam's legacy would be different had he freely allowed his people to visit Jerusalem? In what way? In what area of your life are you tempted to feel spiritually insecure?

- What does the story in 1 Kings 13:1–6 about the shriveled hand tell us about the character of God? Think about the courage of the unnamed prophet. What does his story teach us about speaking truth to power? In what area of your life is God calling you to uncompromising commitment?

- How might the story in 1 Kings 13:11–22 apply to our lives today? Do you feel any sympathy toward the prophet from Judah? Why or why not? How would you respond to someone who claims this story exposes a very harsh and unreasonable side of God?

Monday

Read Galatians 6:7, 8.

Wayne E. Oates observes: "Marketplace thought about the presence of God is one of sentimental familiarity. Country-western songs speak of 'having a little talk with Jesus' almost as if the Lord were a chum with whom one has a chitchat. . . . In stark contrast, however, is the persistent biblical wisdom that God's presence comes to us when we know it not. At the least, our awareness of the presence is an afterthought." How does this statement sync with this week's *Key Text*? Might Jeroboam's chummy, "sentimental familiarity" with God have influenced his disastrous choice to allow anyone to serve as a priest? What does this teach about reverence for our holy God today?

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 4.

Marinate your mind on Ellen White's statement: "[Jeroboam] was in a position to bring about wise reforms in both civil and religious affairs. . . . But Jeroboam failed to make God his trust" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 99).

Read Psalm 91. Write your own psalm that expresses the need and desire to put your trust in God. (You can use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide.)

Wednesday

Read Psalm 51.

One of the *Punch Lines* offers this promise from God: "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19, NIV). Compare this promise to that of Ezekiel 36:26 where God says: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (NIV). After reading today's Bible passage from Psalm 51, pray to God, asking Him to give you a new, undivided heart.

Thursday

Read 1 John 1:7.

What is God trying to teach me through the story of Jeroboam?

How does this lesson inform the way I'm called to live this week?

What are the specific benefits to me when I sell out to God?

Friday

Read Luke 13:34.

Prayerfully consider the comments of Ellen White as she concludes her chapter on Jeroboam.

"Yet the Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him. Through long, dark years when ruler after ruler stood up in bold defiance of Heaven and led Israel deeper and still deeper into idolatry, God sent message after message to His backslidden people. Through His prophets He gave them every opportunity to stay the tide of apostasy and to return to Him. . . . Even in the darkest hours some would remain true to their divine Ruler and in the midst of idolatry would live blameless in the sight of a holy God. These faithful ones were numbered among the goodly remnant through whom the eternal purpose of Jehovah was finally to be fulfilled" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 108).

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 7.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#UR1hF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 22 2020

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 14–16; 1 Kings 15:8–16:34.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 8.

crossroads



Photo Getty Images

flashlight

"Alas, how had the glory of Israel departed! Never before had the chosen people of God fallen so low in apostasy. Of 'the prophets of Baal' there were 'four hundred and fifty,' besides four hundred 'prophets of the groves.' 1 Kings 18:19. Nothing short of the miracle-working power of God could preserve the nation from utter destruction. Israel had voluntarily separated herself from Jehovah, yet the Lord in compassion still yearned after those who had been led into sin, and He was about to send to them one of the mightiest of His prophets, through whom many were to be led back to allegiance to the God of their fathers" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 116).

keytext

"For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

(2 Chronicles 16:9, NIV)

what do you think?

Rank the following spiritual battles from the easiest (1) to the hardest (10):

- ☐ Keeping pure thoughts
- ☐ Refraining from gossip
- ☐ Being honest in schoolwork
- ☐ Speaking only words of kindness
- ☐ Managing anger
- ☐ Spending adequate time with God
- ☐ Refraining from drinking alcohol
- ☐ Helping the undeserving
- ☐ Setting appropriate relationship boundaries
- ☐ Believing in God through hard times

did you know?

In an attempt to keep the different characters in the story straight, note the role each person played and the Hebrew meaning behind their name.

Asa (King of Judah)—“Physician” or “Doctor” or “Deity.”

Omri (Made king of Israel instead of Zimri who had slain Elah)—“Bundle of corn” or “Impetuous” or “Jehovah apportions.”

Ahab (Son of Omri, and his successor as the seventh king of Israel)—“Father’s brother” or “Uncle.”

Jezebel (Wife of Ahab and queen of Israel)—“Condemned” or “The woman who was a she-devil.”

Hanani (The prophet who rebuked Asa for bribing Ben-Hadad)—“Jehovah is gracious” or “He hath shewed me mercy.”

Baasha (King of Israel)—“Boldness” or “Offensive” or “He who lays waste.”

Ben-Hadad (King of Aram, or Syria, who was bribed by Asa to break his alliance with King Baasha)—“Son of the god Hadah.”

Abijah (The father of Asa)—“Jehovah is my Father” or “Father of the sea.”

INTO THE STORY

“Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. . . . He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his laws and commands.”

“The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded. He went out to meet Asa and said to him, ‘Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law.

But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them.’ ”

“Asa then took the silver and gold out of the treasuries of the LORD’s temple and of his own palace and sent it to

Ben-Hadad king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. ‘Let there be a treaty between me and you,’ he said, ‘as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me.’

“Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. . . . When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and abandoned his work. . . .

“At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: ‘Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. . . . For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.’

“Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people.”

“Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him.”

“There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife.”

(2 Chronicles 14:2, 4; 15:1–4; 16:2–5, 7, 9, 10 ; 1 Kings 16:30; 21:25, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

If you were to teach the story of Asa to kindergartners, what would you tell them is the main lesson we can learn from it?

What does the story of Asa teach us about being fully devoted to God?

What do the examples of Ahab and Jezebel teach us about secularism and worldliness?

Asa made some big mistakes in his life and yet the Bible says: "Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life" (2 Chronicles 15:17, NIV). How do you explain this verse? If Asa allowed some idol worship to continue, and then he was involved in a shady deal with Ben-Hadad, how is it that he was "fully committed to the Lord all his life"? What comparisons might you make between King David and Asa? Are there any other characters in the Bible whose stories are similar to Asa's?

punch lines

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' " (**Matthew 16:24, NIV**).

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (**John 15:8, NIV**).

"With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation' " (**Acts 2:40, NIV**).

"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good' " (**Psalms 14:1, NIV**).

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (**Hebrews 13:8, NIV**).

further insight

"The true Christian will make God first and last and best in everything. No ambitious motives will chill his love for God; steadily, perseveringly, will he cause honor to redound to his heavenly Father."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 68, 69.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Romans 7:15.

Review the *What Do You Think?* section. Then summarize today's Bible passage in your own words.

Sunday

Read Matthew 16:24.

Review the story of Asa in the *Into* and *Out of the Story* sections of the lesson. How does his story intersect with the following teachings of Jesus?

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14, NIV).

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (Matthew 7:24–27, NIV).

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30, NIV).

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9.

Review the *Key Text* for this week and reflect on the following questions:

In what specific ways does God "strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him"?

What does it mean for me to commit my heart fully to God?

What were the consequences for Asa because he had done foolish things? What are some of the consequences I have experienced because of my foolish decisions?

Tuesday

Read Acts 2:40.

After pursuing other gods, Israel plummeted into apostasy. In the *Flashlight* section, Ellen White writes: "Nothing short of the miracle-working power of God could preserve the nation from utter destruction."

What modern-day idols (things as well as unhealthy or inappropriate relationships) steal our devotion from God? How do these idols lead to destruction? How is God at work today to give us grace and power to stay focused on Him and avoid destruction?

Wednesday

Choose your favorite text from the *Punch Lines* and rewrite it in your own words.

Thursday

Read 2 Chronicles 16:7–10.

The prophet Hanani spoke a strong word of rebuke against Asa. Asa was not receptive

to this reprimand. Instead of humbly searching his soul and confessing his sin, he "was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people" (2 Chronicles 16:10, NIV).

How do you receive constructive criticism? Do you appreciate it when God sends a word of reproof to you through a friend or family member? Why or why not?

How might Asa's legacy be different had he humbly received Hanani's reproof? What can you learn from Asa's reaction to criticism?

Friday

Read 2 Chronicles 15:17.

The story of King Asa reminds us that God is still looking for followers who are "fully committed." In what way might the followers of Christ today be involved, but not committed. Ask yourself these questions:

Am I involved or committed?

What would it mean for me to totally sell out to God?

What is God's dream for my life that can be realized only by radical commitment?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 8.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#UR1hF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 29 2020

never alone

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 17:1–16.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 9; 10 first part.



Photo by Audrey Goforth

flashlight

“The word of faith and power was upon his [Elijah’s] lips, and his whole life was devoted to the work of reform. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of evil. And while he came to the people as a reprover of sin, his message offered the balm of Gilead to the sin-sick souls of all who desired to be healed” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 119).

keytext

“ ‘It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.’ So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. . . . The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook.”

(1 Kings 17:4–6, NASB)

what do you think?

God sometimes refers to Himself as a father, or a mother, and Jesus even refers to Himself as a brother. If you were in a hard, difficult, or even life-threatening situation in your life, who would you want to be there with you? Rank them in order of importance from 1 being the highest to 5 being the lowest.

- ___ Mother
- ___ Father
- ___ Sister
- ___ Brother
- ___ Best friend

did you know?

The Old Testament is not the only place where we see Elijah. In fact, he appears to Peter and John at the Transfiguration on the Mount of Olives, talking with Jesus. Elijah was not alone, though; with him appeared Moses. Jesus told His two accompanying disciples not to tell anyone about the incident until after His death.

This incident is told in three of the four Gospel accounts with very little variation in the retelling, showing that it was a very important incident in Jesus' life and ministry. God obviously cared a lot about Elijah, and at the end of his ministry, God took Elijah away from this earth so that he could live with Him.

INTO THE STORY

"Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.' The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.'

"So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. "It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain

in the land.

"Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.'

"So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, 'Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink.'

"As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.'

"But she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.'

"Then Elijah said to her, 'Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel, "The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth."'

"So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah."

(1 Kings 17:1-16, NASB)

OUT OF THE STORY

How has God provided for you in your life?

Have you ever had a time when He worked something out for you, or when you felt Him just when you needed Him?

What were some other times in Elijah's life where God provided for him?

How did it strengthen Elijah's faith in God when God helped him out?

It took courage for the widow to feed Elijah when she barely had enough food for herself and her son. How can we exhibit that courage in our lives?

Read 1 Kings 19. How did God show Elijah that He would always be there for him?

Does God still do things like that in modern times? If so, what instances do you know of?

punch lines

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, 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, NASB**).

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me" (**Psalms 139:7-10, NASB**).

"Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth' " (**1 Kings 17:24, NASB**).

"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (**Luke 1:17, NASB**).

"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months" (**James 5:17, NASB**).

further insight

"And to all who, in time of trial and want, give sympathy and assistance to others more needy, God has promised great blessing. He has not changed. His power is no less now than in the days of Elijah."

—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 131, 132.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 41:10.

When you are frightened or in a bad situation it is comforting to have a close person like a family member to offer a hug or a kind word. In the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson you thought about who you would really want to be there with you in a dangerous or scary situation.

How does it make you feel to know that God will never ever leave you, even if there is no one else there for you?

Sunday

Read James 5:17.

All through Elijah's life God provided for and looked out for him. Even when Elijah ran away from his work, God was still with him. At the end of his life, God decided to take Elijah to his real home: heaven. God cared for him so much that He wanted him to live with Him eternally in heaven, and not die here on earth. How would you feel about having that kind of relationship with God? Write your thoughts in a letter to God. (You can use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide if you need additional space.)

Monday

Read 1 Kings 17:4–6.

Read this week's *Key Text*. Can you imagine how much courage it took to walk up to the king of Israel and tell him that there would be no rain until he, the king, gave up being sinful, along with the entire nation that he ruled? But Elijah did! God told him what to do, and he obeyed. God kept Elijah safe from Ahab and later He answered Elijah's prayer for rain. He never let Elijah down. Thank God for

the times when He has helped you out, even if it wasn't so dramatic as Elijah's experiences. Write your thanks as a prayer.

Tuesday

Read Luke 1:17.

The *Flashlight* section for this week really shows what an incredible kind of person Elijah was. He had God's message to tell, and he was going to tell it! Years later another prophet was compared to him. Some even thought that he was Elijah. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, turning people back to God. He preached with such zeal and enthusiasm that people began wondering if he was Elijah. How do you think that kind of zeal and enthusiasm would be met today? Do you know anyone who exhibits that much passion for God and His kingdom?

Wednesday

Read Psalm 139.

Psalm 139 gives us a background glimpse of what David is talking about. God takes care of people. He knows everything about us down to the last hair on our heads. Doesn't it feel comforting to know that we have a God who loves us so much? Look through the Psalms and find other examples of God's love and care for us.

Psalm _____

Psalm _____

Psalm _____

Thursday

Read Isaiah 41:10.

If there was one point in your lifetime when you were especially in need of help, when was it? Did someone come and give you the help you needed or were you left to fend for yourself? Being in a situation that proves difficult and dealing with it alone isn't easy. What did you do in that difficult situation? Did you call on God? Did He answer your call?

Friday

Read Philippians 4:6, 7.

One of the most difficult things for people in their lives is the hard times where they have to completely rely on God for help. Naturally, as humans, we like to try to take things into our own hands and try to do it our way. God repeatedly told the children of Israel to put their faith in Him. Many times they did and were blessed, but often they tried to do things their own way and ended up in a lot of trouble. When are some times when God did come through for you? Was it in a way that you expected? Or was it in a way that worked out well but wasn't exactly what you had in mind? Why do you think it happened that way?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 9; 10 first part

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#UR1hF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 07 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 18:1–40.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 10 last part; 11.

faith on the mountaintop



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

“God cannot use men who, in time of peril, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are needed, are afraid to take a firm stand for the right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 142).

keytext

“Elijah stepped forward and prayed: ‘LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.’ ”

(1 Kings 18:36, NIV)

what do you think?

When I see others in my life doing something I think is wrong,

I usually

- ☐ Ignore it.
 - ☐ Join in.
 - ☐ Tell them what they're doing is wrong.
 - ☐ Keep quiet unless they ask me what I think, then say I think it's wrong.
 - ☐ In a kind, caring way provide positive advice and point them to a better way that is possible through Jesus.
- If I'm doing something wrong, I appreciate it when others in my life
- ☐ Don't bother me about it; mind their own business.
 - ☐ Respectfully tell me where they think I'm making a mistake.
 - ☐ Talk to others and leave me alone.

did you know?

The name "Baal" means "lord." It is used to refer to a number of different pagan gods that were worshiped by the Israelites and the people who lived around them. King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, made the worship of Baal popular among the Israelites.

Pagan gods were believed to control such things as weather, crops, and so on. By declaring that the God of heaven had stopped the rain for three years, Elijah was challenging the belief that Baal would bring rain and good crops. His "showdown" on Mount Carmel demonstrated that God alone controlled every aspect of life and that He alone was worthy of Israel's worship.

INTO THE STORY

"Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.' So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

"Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. 'Baal, answer us!' they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

"At noon Elijah began to taunt them. 'Shout louder!' he said. 'Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.'

So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday

passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

"Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones. . . . With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it. . . . He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, 'Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.'

" 'Do it again,' he said, and they did it again.

" 'Do it a third time,' he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

"At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'

"Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

"When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!'

(1 Kings 18:25-39, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think Elijah thought of the idea of staging a challenge between Baal and the true God?

What did he hope to accomplish by doing this?

Why do you think Elijah made fun of the prophets of Baal? How might they have responded when he did this?

What was the point of soaking the sacrifice with water?

How did Elijah have enough faith to trust that the sacrifice would burn?

What was God's purpose in offering this spectacular display of His power?

How do you think the people watching felt when they saw the sacrifice consumed? How do you think the prophets of Baal felt?

punch lines

"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6, NIV).

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:10–12, NIV).

"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20, NIV).

"And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17, NIV).

further insight

"Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 63.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Hebrews 11:6.

Elijah had the courage to speak out when he believed the people of Israel were doing wrong. God gave Elijah a job to do, and Elijah had the courage and faith to follow through with it.

What does it mean to you to say that “without faith it is impossible to please God”? If you felt you had to speak out against something you thought was wrong, would it take a lot of faith to do that? Would you trust God to come through for you as He did for Elijah in this story?

Think about a situation in your life in which you believe God is calling you to trust Him. If you had greater faith, what could you do in this situation?

Sunday

Read Matthew 17:20.

Imagine yourself watching in the crowd on Mount Carmel as Elijah faces off against the prophets of Baal. As an ordinary Israelite, you may be torn between Baal worship and faith in the true God. After three years of drought and famine, you're prepared to worship any god who can bring rain.

All the odds seem to be stacked in Baal's favor. Yet after hours of noisy worship, the priests of Baal have accomplished nothing. Your attention swings to the lone prophet of God, Elijah. His sacrifice is soaked with water, making it abundantly clear that he can't light it himself. He relies completely on the invisible God of your fathers.

Write three words that describe what you might feel at that moment:

Monday

Read 1 Kings 18:36.

According to the *Key Text*, what did Elijah hope the demonstration on Mount Carmel would prove? _____

Was this goal accomplished? _____ Find

a text in the *Into the Story* section that supports your answer. _____

Tuesday

Read Ephesians 6:10–18.

What do you think it means to “take a firm stand for the right” as the passage from *Prophets and Kings* says that Christians should do?

Sometimes we face situations in which others are doing wrong and we need to have the courage and faith to speak out. In which of the following situations would you feel that, as a Christian, you should point out that what's happening is wrong?

- _____ Your classmates are making fun of a disabled student behind his back.
- _____ You are shopping with your friend when you notice she quietly shoplifts a small item.
- _____ You are at a friend's house with no adults around when someone brings in a case of beer and several of your friends start to drink.
- _____ A friend brings an Ouija board to your house and asks that you help him ask it to contact his uncle who died last year.
- _____ You notice someone cheating off your paper during a test.

How likely would you be to speak out in these situations? What different ways are there of handling these situations?

Wednesday

Read Luke 1:17.

The Bible verses in the *Punch Lines* section talk about what it means to be a person of courage and faith, to take a stand for what is right. Elijah was such a powerful biblical example of this kind of faith and courage that centuries later, in the time of Jesus, people still looked to him as the ideal man of courageous faith. John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, was said to have come “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (NIV), and some people even believed that Jesus Himself was Elijah reborn! That's the kind of impact a person of courage and faith can make on the world.

As you look around you today, who do you see setting an example of courageous faith?

Thursday

Read James 1:12.

Look back at the situations presented in Tuesday's lesson. Are any of them similar to situations you have faced? How do you react when others are doing things you believe are wrong?

What's one situation you're facing now in which you feel God is calling you to stand up for what is right? _____

What could you do to stand up for God in this situation? _____

Friday

Read 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

Elijah's faith was strong on Mount Carmel because he had a lifetime of experience in trusting God. He had just lived through three years of famine, depending totally on God's power to provide even the most basic, everyday needs for him. Sometimes we read stories like that of Elijah on Mount Carmel and think, *I could never have that kind of faith!* But faith is like muscle—it gets stronger by being used.

In your prayer time today talk to God about the things you're worried about. Place them trustingly in His hands and ask Him to help your faith grow so that you will be ready when bigger tests come.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 10 last part; 11.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.UR1Hf1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 14 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 18:41–46; 19:1–18.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 12; 13.

doubt in the valley



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

“For the disheartened there is a sure remedy—faith, prayer, work. Faith and activity will impart assurance and satisfaction that will increase day by day. Are you tempted to give way to feelings of anxious foreboding or utter despondency? In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. . . . Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him” (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164).

keytext

“The LORD said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ ”

(1 Kings 19:11, NIV)

what do you think?

Which of the following things help you when you're feeling down or discouraged?

- ☐ Talking to a friend
☐ Spending time alone
☐ Listening to music
☐ Prayer
☐ Talking to a parent, counselor, pastor, or other caring adult
☐ Exercise
☐ Doing something for someone else
☐ Other: _____

did you know?

Spiritual highs are often followed by spiritual lows. Just ask anyone who has ever returned from the excitement of a youth retreat or rally to deal with the problems of everyday life. When you're surrounded by other Christians, singing and praising the Lord, it's easy to feel happy, excited, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Three weeks later when you're coping with parents, homework, and peer pressure you may find yourself crashing into discouragement or despair.

The Bible doesn't promise that God's people will never know unhappiness or discouragement. After his triumphant showdown against the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, the prophet Elijah collapsed into discouragement and despair. But God didn't abandon him—and He won't abandon you when times get tough.

INTO THE STORY

"Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.'"

"Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, LORD,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

"All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was

some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

"The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. . . .

"And the word of the LORD came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

"He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'

"The LORD said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.'

"Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave."

(1 Kings 19:1–13, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Elijah had just won a stunning victory for God. What happened right afterwards to make him feel discouraged?

Do you think Elijah was sincere in wishing he could die? Why or why not?

What was the angel's advice to Elijah immediately after he said he wanted to die? Why do you think this was good advice?

Carefully read Elijah's reply to the Lord's question: "What are you doing here?" What do Elijah's words tell you about how he was feeling at that point?

Why didn't Elijah hear God's voice in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire? What is the significance of God's voice being a "gentle whisper" at this point in Elijah's story?

How can you best hear God's voice speaking to you?

punch lines

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV).

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD" (Psalm 31:24, NIV).

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:30, 31, NIV).

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you" (Isaiah 43:1, 2, NIV).

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

further insight

"It is not always the most learned presentation of God's truth that convicts and converts the soul. . . . It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart."

—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 169.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read 1 Kings 19:1–13.

What does Elijah say after sitting down under the broom tree?

How do you think Elijah felt at that moment?

When have you felt most discouraged in your life? Do you think you've ever felt as bad as Elijah did under the broom tree?

List the specific things God says or does for Elijah to help him through this experience:

Look back at the *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson. What helps you most when you are feeling down? What do you think God might say to you at such a time?

Sunday

Read Matthew 11:28.

Look through the *Out of the Story* questions and think about your answers. Elijah had just won a huge victory for the Lord. Yet when Queen Jezebel threatened his life, he wanted to lie down and die.

Spiritual highs are often followed by spiritual lows. We need both—the highs and the lows, the mountaintops and the valleys—to grow spiritually. Elijah learned through this experience that God wouldn't leave him alone, that God's still small voice was still speaking to him.

Monday

Read Isaiah 40:30, 31.

God told Elijah to stand on the mountaintop and get ready for the Lord's presence. Elijah had already experienced an amazing miracle on Mount Carmel, yet just a few weeks later he needs to stand on another mountaintop and meet God again in order to have his faith renewed.

When we experience “down” times in the Christian life, what are some ways we can stand in God's presence again? List some things that help you to hear God's “still, small voice.”

Tuesday

Read 1 John 5:14.

In the *Flashlight* section, Ellen White has some specific suggestions for Christians who are discouraged: faith, prayer, and work.

Faith involves trusting God and knowing that He is still with us, even when we don't feel like it. Our faith is not based on how we feel, but on the Bible's promises that God is faithful and cares for us no matter what.

Prayer is our contact with God. Just as God spoke to Elijah through a gentle voice, He speaks to us in times of prayer. Prayer isn't just talking to God; it involves listening to Him too.

Work takes us outside of our own problems and helps us focus on the needs of others. Doing something kind for someone else can help lift our spirits when we're down. Can you think of something you can do for someone else that might help you to feel better too?

Wednesday

The promises in God's Word can be great for encouraging us when we get discouraged. Look through the texts in the *Punch Lines* and find the one that's most encouraging to you. Copy it on a card or a piece of poster paper. You can even decorate it with pictures or designs. Then put it somewhere it will catch your eye and encourage you next time you're feeling discouraged.

Thursday

Read Psalm 31:24.

It's time to put together some of the things we've learned this week into a “prescription” you can use when discouragement hits. Fill in the blanks to write your unique prescription below. It

will also be helpful for you to share this with a supporting friend or two, which will strengthen your resolve to implement it. (Go to www.cornerstoneconnections.net to find resources for choosing a support/accountability partner.)

Next time I feel discouraged, I will talk to _____.

I will listen to _____.

I will think about and repeat this Bible verse: _____.

I will pray, asking God for _____.

I will do three things that I enjoy and that are good for me _____.

I will do the following for someone else: _____.

Friday

Read John 16:33.

Ups and downs are natural in the Christian life. But sometimes we can figure out what triggers the down times and start looking to God for encouragement before we get too far “down.”

Elijah's discouragement was triggered by fear of Queen Jezebel and her threats against his life. Fear is one emotion that can often send us spiraling into negative feelings. Others include anger, envy, loneliness, and grief.

What kinds of situations trigger you to start feeling down and discouraged? Try applying some of those remedies you made in yesterday's lesson as soon as negative feelings start. God has the power to get you through the bad times and bring you back to the “mountaintop” again!

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 12; 13.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.UR1hF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 21 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 18:20–22; 19:14–18; Revelation 18:2, 4, 5.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 14.

who's counting?



Photo by Alden Ho

flashlight

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. . . . Then let no man attempt to number Israel today, but let everyone have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world" (*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 188, 189).

keytext

"[Elijah] replied, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant. . . . I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.' The LORD said to him, . . . 'I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.' "

(1 Kings 19:14, 15, 18, NIV)

what do you think?

Either/Or

Think through the following questions and prepare to defend the side you take.

1. Since it is so difficult to know a person's heart, do you believe a majority of people will be saved, or a minority of people will be saved?
2. Do you think we will be surprised by who is saved (since man looks on the outside, but God looks on the heart), or will we not be surprised by who is saved because our lifestyle tends to convey our deepest values (by their fruit you will know them)?
3. Do you think it is easier to be faithful (obedient) to God in adversity or is it easier to be faithful to God when positive things are happening?

did you know?

In an informal survey given to college students, 8 out of 10 young adults reported that they grew closer to God in trials and adversity as opposed to seasons of ease and prosperity. If a similar survey were given to church members and your friends, do you think the numbers would be similar? Why or why not?

INTO THE STORY

“Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’

“But the people said nothing.

“Then Elijah said to them, ‘I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets.’ ”

“He went into a cave and spent the night.

“And the word of the LORD came to him: ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’

“He replied, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword.

I am the only

one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.’

“The LORD said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’

“Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

“Then a voice said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’

“He replied, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.’

“The LORD said to him, ‘Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.’ ”

(1 Kings 18:21, 22; 19:9–18, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the story and note what insights are new to you.

As you read through the story, what words, phrases, or themes are repeated?

What do you think is the message God is trying to convey through this story?

What emotions do you see displayed in Elijah's experience?

Is there a promise to claim?

Is there a lesson to learn?

Is there an action to take?

Is there a decision to make?

What are similarities between Elijah's experience and our lives today?

Some have suggested that the people who hear God's voice often appear peculiar to the world they live in. Who are some other biblical characters who were clearly listening to a different voice from the one the world was listening to? (Examples: Noah, Moses, Esther, David—taking on a giant, Daniel and his three friends, etc.)

punch lines

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" **(John 10:14–16, NIV).**

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" **(Matthew 7:13, 14, NIV).**

"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" **(1 Peter 1:8, NIV).**

"Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore; those who are loyal have vanished from the human race" **(Psalm 12:1, NIV).**

"Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus" **(Revelation 14:12, NRSV).**

further insight

"Patience under trials will keep us from saying and doing those things which will injure our own souls and injure those with whom we associate. Let your trials be what they will, nothing can seriously injure you if you exercise patience, if you are calm and unexcited when in trying positions."

—Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling*, p. 70.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Matthew 7:13.

The *What Do You Think?* exercise invites you to take a side and explain your response. Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it" (Matthew 7:13, NIV). Do you think today's reading is difficult to explain or easy to explain? Why?

List a few examples of what the easy road looks like in your everyday life as well as what the narrow way looks like.

Easy Road: _____

Narrow Road: _____

Sunday

Read Revelation 14:12.

Read the *Into the Story* verses about Elijah's struggle and answer the questions listed in the *Out of the Story* section. How would you explain Elijah's state of mind? What are some other stories in Scripture that portray similar themes as the one in this week's lesson?

In what area of your life might you look "peculiar" to those around you if you were to obey God fully?

Monday

Read 1 Kings 19:14, 15, 18.

The *Key Text* for this week combines Elijah's despair and God's encouragement. As you read today's passage, think of someone you know who feels alone because of their faith in God. Take time today to pray

for them and perhaps write a note or convey the message to them that they are not alone. What are some other Bible passages that you can use in your note of encouragement? Use a concordance and look up the word "alone" to begin your search for those additional verses.

Why do you think God spoke to Elijah in a gentle whisper rather than through a powerful earthquake? What does this tell us about how we seek to hear God in our own life?

Tuesday

Read Psalm 12:1.

As you read the *Flashlight* quote from *Prophets and Kings*, notice the simple reminder that when you think very few are even paying attention to God, many have given their undying allegiance to Him around the world. How might this encouragement inspire you and your church to renewed faithfulness?

The next time you hear numbers of people baptized or added to the church, remember the many who are not counted or even known.

Wednesday

Read through the *Punch Lines* carefully and underline or highlight the key phrases in each verse. How do these verses relate to the story of Elijah's struggle?

As a young person in the church, which passage is the most helpful to you? If you were to choose one passage to apply to your life this week, which one would you choose? Why?

Thursday

Read Matthew 10:32.

In what area of your life do you need to make a decisive stand for God? Write out your commitment below:

Friday

Read 1 Peter 1:7, 8.

Take time this week to listen for God to speak to you. It may be that He speaks in thunderous ways, but more likely you will hear His voice in the silence. Journal below what you have "heard" Him impress on your heart this week.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 14.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#UR1hF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 28 2020

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 17–21.

Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 15.

life sentence



Photo Getty Images

flashlight

"If the teachings of God's Word were made the controlling influence in the life of every man and woman, if mind and heart were brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in national and in social life would find no place" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 192).

keytext

"In everything he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there."

(1 Kings 22:43, NIV)

what do you think?

Which do you think are characteristics of God's inspired

leadership? Rank the following according to how crucial they are for good government—mark (1) for most crucial and (6) for least crucial.

- ___ Civil peace and security
- ___ Spiritual teaching and wisdom
- ___ Military strength and protection
- ___ Charismatic leadership
- ___ Clear sense of right and wrong
- ___ Abundance of wealth

Explain your reasons for ranking these the way you did.

did you know?

The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 31.

INTO THE STORY

"After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat.

Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, " 'A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar' (that is, En Gedi). Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

"Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the LORD in the front of the new courtyard and said:

" 'LORD, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over

all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, "If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us." ' "

" 'But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.' "

"All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD.

"Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.

"He said: 'Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's." ' ' "

(2 Chronicles 20:1–15, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

In verse 1 of 2 Chronicles 20 the Bible sets the stage for this week's story of Jehoshaphat with "After this . . ." Survey the following snapshots of his reign and note the various aspects of Jehoshaphat's leadership.

- 2 Chronicles 17:1–6 General summary
- 2 Chronicles 17:7–10 Jehoshaphat sends out teachers to instruct the people about God
- 2 Chronicles 17:11–19 Wealth and security
- 2 Chronicles 18:1–34 Debacle with Ahab against Ramoth Gilead
- 2 Chronicles 19:1–2 Jehu's rebuke and affirmation
- 2 Chronicles 19:4–11 Organized judges for civil order
- 2 Chronicles 20:16–29 Battle victory through singing

What do you think is the key verse in this week's story?

What other people in Scripture does Jehoshaphat remind you of? Why?

What leadership qualities do you see in Jehoshaphat that are most noble?

What might be one of Jehoshaphat's weaknesses as a leader?

punch lines

"Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God" (**Psalm 86:2, NIV**).

"Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him" (**Psalm 32:10, NIV**).

"As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more" (**1 Thessalonians 4:1, NIV**).

"You must distinguish between what is sacred and what is common, between what is ceremonially unclean and what is clean. And you must teach the Israelites all the decrees that the LORD has given them through Moses" (**Leviticus 10:10, 11, NLT**).

"And you will find happiness by worshiping him. God will answer your prayers, and you will keep the promises you made to him" (**Job 22:26, 27, CEV**).

further insight

"Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying his commands that a man is made truly great."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 30, 31.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 20:12.

The ranking exercise in the *What Do You Think?* section of this lesson challenges you to identify the leadership qualities you think are most important as well as least important. We often think leaders always have a clear sense of what to do in times of crisis; but note what Jehoshaphat said to God as the enemies of Israel were approaching in today's Bible verse. How would you describe this act as an attribute of a good leader?

Sunday

Read John 20:30, 31 and 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

The *Into the Story* section contains a portion of a battle that demonstrates the God-inspired leadership of Jehoshaphat. Answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section, including the snapshots of Jehoshaphat's reign. How would you compare Jehoshaphat's leadership style with other leaders in the Bible? According to our Bible readings for today, all stories of Scripture have the power to speak to us. As you learn more about this great king, what message do you think God has for you in this passage?

Monday

Read 1 Kings 22:43.

King Jehoshaphat's great qualities are summed up in one sentence in today's Bible verse and this week's *Key Text*; in the following sentence the Bible admits a shortcoming that also marked his life. Read this passage in a few different translations, if available, and think about what close friends might say about you, in a sentence. In the space given below, write a sentence about the life of someone you admire:

Tuesday

Read Psalm 86:2.

While there are many things that influence your outlook and your behavior, there are a few basic ideas that influence most of your decisions. Read the quote from *Prophets and Kings* about the controlling influences in your life. To what degree do you think the evil in the world would diminish if people allowed God's will to become the "controlling influence" in their lives? What laws or principles of God's way of life would make the most significant change for the better?

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* listed in this week's lesson and identify the verse that speaks to you the most. In what way is this passage most relevant to your life today?

Think of a friend or someone you know that has the ability to influence others but does not often seize those moments for good. Say a prayer today for that person and pray for an opportunity to encourage their leadership potential. Sometimes a little positive encouragement can awaken a more earnest desire to make a positive impact on the world around us. Sometimes affirming words can remind people of previous commitments they had made that need to be renewed.

Thursday

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

It may be that the great things that are ultimately remembered about your life are built on the practical things you do from day to day. Make a list of three "great" things you want to do today that will have eternal significance. Perhaps it is an act of generosity or a secret deed of kindness. Maybe you could extend grace for those who are struggling or forgiveness for someone who has wronged

you. Make your list specific enough so that you can know that you have done a "great thing" today. It will also be helpful for you to share this with a supporting friend or two, which will strengthen your resolve to implement it. (Go to www.cornerstoneconnections.net to find resources for choosing a support/accountability partner.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Friday

Read Leviticus 10:10, 11.

Take time to reflect on Jehoshaphat's storied journey of devotion, mistakes, and uncompromising faithfulness to God's plan for Israel. His story holds up a high standard of loyalty to God and courageous leadership for Israel. But his life has mistakes and moments that exposed his flaws as well. Ruminates on how we can be great leaders and people of influence for God even though we are not always perfect. Write down a few thoughts you have on the tension between greatness and making mistakes, as it appears in your life. (You can use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide.)

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 15.

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