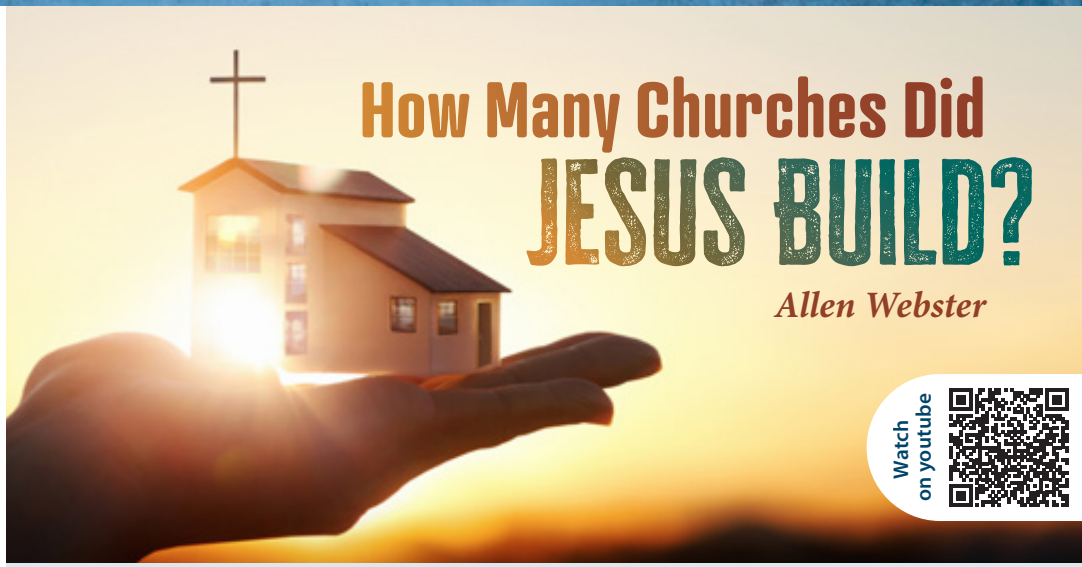
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VOLUME 31 NUMBER 11

How Many Churches Did JESUS BUILD?

Allen Webster



Jesus, the Carpenter, built a church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus, the Founder, established only one church (Acts 2). Jesus, the Purchaser, paid for only one church (Acts 20:28). Jesus, the Savior, puts every saved person in it (Acts 2:47). Jesus, the Proprietor, manages only one church (Ephesians 5:25–27; 1 Peter 2:5)

Is His same church on earth today? This is one of the most important questions a sinner can ask. If the answer is *no*, then one need not be concerned about church affiliation. If it is *yes*, then one must find the true church to enjoy spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), including salvation (2 Timothy 2:10). How may one determine the answer? If he asks for opinions, no justified conclusion will be reached. If he consults creeds, he will not find a trustworthy answer. If he looks to his forefathers' traditions, he may well find mistaken practices.

Since the kingdom is the church, terms used interchangeably in Matthew 16:18–19, and the kingdom was guaranteed to be indestructible (Daniel 2:44), endless (Luke 1:32–33), immoveable (Hebrews 12:28), and to outlast the world (2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:24), it follows that the church must still be around. Many churches have been established through the centuries since Jesus returned to heaven, and they teach practically everything under the sun. How could one find Jesus' church in such a hodgepodge of institutions, buildings, websites, books, dogmas, and promotions?

It is not as impossible as it seems at first blush. The Bible promises to equip us with everything needed for every situation (2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Peter 1:3). It claims to be the authority in spiritual matters (Isaiah 8:20; 1 Peter 4:11). It gives reliable answers. It is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16), true (John 17:17), understandable (Ephesians 3:4), and worthy of being followed (2 Peter 1:3). Let us start with Scripture, use the common sense God gave us, and see what can be determined.

We might ask, "What do we know about the church Jesus built?" The Bible replies . . .

ONLY ONE CHURCH WAS PROPHESIED

The Old Testament contains many promises of the coming kingdom or church. Isaiah revealed at least five characteristics in one passage around 750 B.C.:

> Now it shall come to pass in the latter days [*Christian Dispensation*] that the

> mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it [*universality*]. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways [*knowledge as the gateway to entrance*], and we will walk in His paths [*faithfulness required of members*]. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares [*peaceable nature*], and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:2–4).

Daniel prophesied of it:

> In the days of these kings [*Roman Empire*] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [*type of government*] which shall never be destroyed [*duration*]; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people [*divine protection*]; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44).

Another beautiful picture of it is a shepherd and his flock (Ezekiel 37:24). God predicted that He would set one Shepherd and King over all His followers (both Jews and Gentiles). This was fulfilled in the church, where Jesus is both the Shepherd of the flock and King of the kingdom (John 10:11, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:24–26).

ONLY ONE CHURCH WAS PROMISED

Jesus said, "On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). This promise contains three facts:

- His church would be singular in number. He never promised to build many churches; He promised only one.
- It would be separated from the world. The word *church* (*ekklesia* in Greek) means "called out."
- It would be secure. The gates of hell—Satan's plots, policies, and power—would not be able to overwhelm it. Jesus would die on a cross, but Satan would not be able to keep Him dead. Jesus would be resurrected and accomplish its founding in spite of all the devil could do.

It follows that the one institution that Jesus left behind, the church of Christ, is the true church. It was established on the first Pentecost after His resurrection (recorded in Acts 2). One can read of its history, doctrines, and practices in the New Testament epistles (Romans–Jude). Wherever the New Testament has been preached and practiced, the church of Christ has sprung up throughout history and throughout nations.

Someone might object, saying, "I thought all different churches made up the one church He promised to build, and the different churches are just the branches of the vine" (John 15:1–7). No, Jesus said that He is the vine and Christians (disciples)—not churches—are the branches. Jesus' church was never to be divided. He prayed for all His followers to be "one" (John 17:20–21). He rebuked those who were divided (1 Corinthians 1:10–13), commanding them to "speak the same thing," and be of "the same judgment." Churches wearing different names, teaching different doctrines, obeying different plans of salvation, and worshiping in different ways, cannot make up the one church that Jesus promised. They oppose each other and confuse the world (cf. John 17:23).

Mixing some Bible truth with some doctrines of men corrupts the whole thing (Mark 7:7–9). To have a McDonald's restaurant, one could not combine McDonald's menu with the menus of Burger King, Sonic, Five Guys, and Wendy's. To have a FedEx franchise, one cannot combine it with UPS and the Post Office. Combining car parts from a Ford, Toyota, Chevrolet, or Kia with a Tesla would not make any one of those brands.

ONLY ONE CHURCH WAS PRODUCED

Following that eventful Pentecost day, one reads of only one church in Judea and the Roman Empire. It met in different localities, but all Christians (Acts 11:26) taught and practiced Christianity in the same way (Acts 2:42–47; Galatians 1:6–9). Luke recorded that, following Pentecost, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Paul confirmed that there was one church in the decades following. He taught the same thing in every church (1 Corinthians 4:17). He first identified the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22–23), and then affirmed "there is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). He said there is "yet one body" (1 Corinthians 12:20). He explained that Christ "is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). A head with multiple bodies, or a body with multiple heads, would be a physical monstrosity. The same is true of a spiritual body.

A simple reading of Ephesians 5:23–30 shows the singularity of the church no fewer than eleven times:

> For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of **the church**; and He is the Savior of **the body**. Therefore, just as **the church** is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved **the church** and gave Himself for **her**, that He might sanctify and cleanse **her** with the washing of water by the word, that He might present **her** to Himself a glorious **church**, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that **she** should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does **the church**. For we are members of His **body,** of His flesh and of His bones.

These verses prove that there was one church in the first century.

Now we must contemplate if there is one true church today. To determine if the true church exists today, one must simply compare what the pattern (New Testament) says with what is taught and practiced in any church today. When he finds the one church that measures up to the pattern in all the essential matters—how to be saved, how to worship, what to teach, and how to live the Christian life—he knows he has found the right one.

Since the denominational (divided) concept is unscriptural, any church that claims to be a denomination cannot be the one true church. Any church whose name

(description) is unscriptural (not found in the Bible) cannot be the true church (cf. Romans 16:16). Any church that demands more or less than hearing, faith, repentance, confession, and immersion for salvation cannot be the true church (John 6:44; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37). Any church teaching that one is born a sinner, or one must wait for a miracle to be saved, and that one cannot fall from grace once a person is saved, is not the true church (Matthew 18:1–3; 11:28–30; Galatians 5:4; 2 Peter 2:20–22). Any church that does not worship by singing, praying, studying, giving, and partaking of the Lord's supper each Sunday cannot be the Lord's church (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Colossians 3:16). Any church that adds mechanical music to worship or women in leadership positions is in violation of the New Testament pattern (Ephesians 5:19; 1 Timothy 2:11–15; Revelation 22:18–19).

Please consider these matters carefully; do not let anyone cause you to dismiss them as unimportant. They will be important on judgment day; therefore they should be important today. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). May the Lord bless all of us in our search for truth and salvation. Never settle for less than Christ's church.



What Really Changed Paul's Life?

All of Jerusalem was disturbed (Acts 21:30). Paul had been seized, dragged out of the temple, almost beaten to death, and falsely charged with desecrating the temple (Acts 21:30–32, 35).

Of interest, when he was finally allowed to defend himself, he talked about—of all things—his conversion. He spoke of

- his education at the feet of Gamaliel (22:1–3)
- his convictions relative to the strictness of the law (22:3)
- his dedication as a zealot, persecuting the church (22:3–5)
- his immersion for the remission of sins (22:6–16); and
- his commission as one sent to the Gentiles (22:17–21).

Question: What really changed Paul's life? What turned him from one religion to another? What redirected his energies? Why was he converted?

Answer: He saw Jesus! On the road to Damascus, his associates saw the same light Paul encountered, but only Paul was temporarily blinded. Why? Paul was the only one actually to see the Lord in His glory, and it changed his life forever (Acts 22:6–9; 9:7).

So, when you and I study the Old Testament, we are encouraged to anticipate a Savior. When we study the New Testament, we are introduced to Jesus as that Savior. If we are baptized into Him (Galatians 3:26–27) and allow Him to live in us (Galatians 2:20), like Paul, it will make all the difference in our lives and our eternity. —Dan Winkler, Huntingdon, Tennessee



Four Big Little Words

TRUST in the Lord, for His promise is true.
DELIGHT in the Lord; it will bring joy to you.
COMMIT yourself; do His will every day.
WAIT on the Lord; hear what He has to say. —Ivar Seger

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart."

PROVERBS 3:5

Enthusiastic Stew

One restaurant's menu had an item named "Enthusiastic Stew." A customer asked the waitress why it was called that. She replied, "Because the cook puts everything he has got into it!" How much better would our homes and congregations be if we all were to "put everything we have got" into them?

"Fervent in spirit."

ROMANS 12:11

God's Plan for Saving Man

Watch on youtube

Divine Love: John 3:16
God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9
Holy Spirit's Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13
Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16
Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37
Christian's Work: James 2:24
Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Peace in the Home

There is no peace in the world because there is no order in the nation. There is no order in the nation because there is no harmony in the home. There is no harmony in the home because there is no beauty in the character. There is no beauty in the character because there is no righteousness in the heart.

—Author Unknown

"Peace I leave with you."

JOHN 14:27

Wedding Vows

The preacher was asked, "How did the wedding come off?" He replied, "Fine, until I asked the bride if she would obey, and she said, 'Do you think I am crazy?' And the groom, who was in a sort of daze, mumbled, 'I do.' Then things happened fast."

"As the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church."

EPHESIANS 5:24–25

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Rules for Dating

The Bible records beautiful love stories—Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, Joseph and Mary—but dating as we know it is a modern practice. Since it powerfully shapes hearts and futures, it must be governed by God's timeless principles.

D—Determine. Decide whom you will serve (Joshua 24:15). Before you ever date, decide who rules your life. If Christ is not the center of your life before dating, He will not suddenly become Lord afterward (Matthew 6:33). Settle this first.

A—Ask. "Why should I obey God?" Because His commands are for our good. When He says "do," He is protecting joy; when He says "do not," He is preventing heartache. Why date? Not for prestige, jealousy, or sex (Galatians 5:19–21), but for friendship and maturity, and eventually for finding a godly marriage partner. What are my limits? Purity survives only where limits exist (1 Corinthians 6:18).

T—Time. Take time for God (Ephesians 5:16). Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).

I—Influence. Help one another grow closer to Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33).

N—Name. Keep your reputation. "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Dates plant seeds—habits, memories, expectations.

G—Glory. Ask, "What honors God?" not "How far can we go?" God's way is not restrictive—it is protective. Choose purity, honor Christ, and let Him guide the process and the future. —Glenn Colley

Just for Fun — Acts 2 Word Search

Find the words in blue below. Lines go diagonally and all directions.

"Then those who **gladly** received his **word** were **baptized**; and that day about three thousand **souls** were **added** to them. And they continued **steadfastly** in the apostles' **doctrine** and **fellowship**, in the breaking of **bread**, and in **prayers**. Then fear came upon every soul, and many **wonders** and **signs** were done through the **apostles**. Now all who **believed** were **together**, and had all things in **common**, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as **anyone** had **need**."

—ACTS 2:41–45

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

Do Not Tamper with the Doctor's Orders



Medicines and drugs can be beneficial, but they may be dangerous if handled improperly. Physicians and druggists are vital for applying powerful medicines.

In religion, as in medicine, there must be no tampering with the Doctor's orders by unskilled hands. Three things must be avoided: Any addition to the Word of God; any subtraction from the Word of God; and any substitution for any specification of the Word of God.

With unbounded confidence in Christ as the good Physician, we are sure of three facts: His diagnosis is correct; His blood is the remedy; and His Word is absolutely safe. We simply want the Word as He gave it.

When a preacher dispenses spiritual medicine by quoting Acts 8:23 as saying, "I see that you are *still* poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity," he is guilty of adding to the divine directions. He added "still" to indicate that Simon had not become a Christian. The Bible does not say that Simon was "still" lost. It says he had believed and been baptized (Acts 8:13), and Jesus said all who do that are saved (Mark 16:16). Then Simon sinned, and Peter told him he was on the road to perdition. Inserting "still" to preserve the unfounded doctrine that a child of God cannot sin and be lost is unscrupulous.

A preacher slips a little narcotic into his preaching-prescription by quoting John 3:16 as "Whoever *only* believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Only" is a narcotic. It lulls the believer into false security, causing him to think that salvation is attained at faith without any further acts of obedience. The Bible teaches that faith is essential to salvation, but it does not teach that "faith only" will save (Ephesians 2:8; James 2:24).

What about love? Is a man saved without loving God? No (1 John 4:8). Then a man is not saved by faith only (1 Corinthians 13:13). What about repentance? What about baptism? Both are essential (Acts 2:38; John 3:5).

No pharmacist has a right to put part of some other prescription into your medicine. No preacher has the right to misuse part of a Bible verse either. Take tithing, for instance. It was God's prescription to Jews under the old law. The new covenant, the law which came into effect after Jesus' death (Hebrews 9:16–17), does not include tithing.

Instrumental music is foreign to the divine directions for Christians. The Jews used it in the Old Testament, and you can read in history where it was introduced into "Christian" worship in the middle of the seventh century by Pope Vitalian I, but you cannot read it in the Lord's law to Christians.

The Sabbath day was in place under the law of Moses. It is out of place in the gospel dispensation. God said our rest is heaven (Hebrews 4:9).

We should be careful with the divine directions. —Gayle Oler

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



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 31:11

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 31.9 *How Well Do You Know Noah and the Ark?:* 1. Just, God (Genesis 6:9); 2. Gopher (6:14); 3. Pitch (6:14); 4. 300 (6:15); 5. 50 (6:15); 6. 30 (6:15); 7. Violence (6:13); 8. 600 (7:6, 11); 9. Two (7:2); 10. Seven (7:2); 11. The wickedness of man was great, and the Lord was sorry He had made them (6:5–6); 12. Never again would there be a flood to destroy the earth (9:11); 13. 40 days (7:12); 14. 150 days (7:24); 15. Ararat (8:4); 16. A raven (8:7); 17. A dove (8:8–12); 18. The rainbow (9:13); 19. Shem, Ham, and Japheth (7:13); 20. Eight (1 Peter 3:20); 21. Burnt offerings of every clean animal and bird (8:20); 22. 350 (9:28); 23. Baptism is the antitype which now saves us (1 Peter 3:21).

V. 31.10 *New Testament Bible Characters:* 1. Barabbas (Matthew 27:21); 2. Joses / Barnabas (Acts 4:36); 3. Luke (Luke 1:3; Colossians 4:14); 4. Apollos (Acts 18:24–26); 5. Bar-Jesus / Elymas (Acts 13:6–11); 6. Nicodemus (John 3:1–5); 7. Peter (Acts 2:1, 14); 8. Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52); 9. Lydia (Acts 16:14–15); 10. Lazarus (Luke 16:20–22); 11. Mary (Matthew 1:18); 12. Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); 13. Judas (Matthew 27:3–5); 14. Martha (Luke 10:38–42); 15. Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:2); 16. Herod (Matthew 2:16); 17. Philip (Acts 8:35); 18. Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57–58); 19. Andrew (John 1:40–42); 20. John the Baptist (Matthew 14:6–10); 21. Diotrephes (3 John 1:9); 22. Tertullus (Acts 24:1–9); 23. Trophimus (1 Timothy 4:20); 24. Malchus (John 18:10–11); 25. Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

The Book of Esther

Find answers here: Esther 1:1–3, 10–20; 2:4–9, 14–19, 21–23; 3:1–15; 4:10–17; 5:1–14; 6:1–11; 7:1–10; 8:5–11; 9:1–5, 16–22. *Questions are taken from the New King James Version.*

1. Esther was queen during the reign of King _____.
2. The king ruled over _____ provinces.
3. The king's capital city was _____.
4. Queen _____ was removed from her position for refusing the king's command.
5. The king sought a new queen by gathering young women from throughout the _____.
6. Esther's Hebrew name was _____.
7. Esther was raised by her cousin _____.
8. Esther was of the tribe of _____.
9. Esther found favor in the eyes of _____, the keeper of the women.
10. Esther was crowned queen in the _____ year of King Ahasuerus.
11. Mordecai uncovered a plot against the king by _____ and _____.
12. Haman was the son of _____.
13. Haman was offended because Mordecai would not _____ before him.
14. Haman cast lots, called _____, to determine the day to destroy the Jews.
15. The decree to destroy the Jews was sealed with the king's _____.
16. Esther hesitated to approach the king because anyone who did so uninvited could be _____.
17. Esther could have come to the kingdom "for such a time as _____."
18. Esther asked the Jews to _____ for her before she approached the king.
19. The king extended his _____ to Esther when she came before him.
20. Esther invited the king and Haman to a _____.
21. Haman built gallows _____ cubits high for Mordecai.
22. The king ordered _____ to be read.
23. Mordecai was honored by being led through the city on the king's _____.



Born for a STORM

Andrew Jackson once declared, "I was born for a storm, and a calm does not suit me."

Although "a calm" might not have suited Andrew Jackson, it probably would have suited Esther just fine. However, she was born for a storm. She did not seek danger, power, or prominence. She was an orphaned Jewish girl who found herself in a palace far from home, living quietly and cautiously. Yet God was preparing her for a moment that would test her courage, faith, and obedience.

Haman had pushed through a decree to destroy all of the Jews on a certain date because a Jew named Mordecai had refused to bow down to him. The only thing that stood in the madman's way was Queen Esther, who, unbeknownst to him, was a Jew and had been raised by Mordecai (Esther 2–3).

In an effort to persuade Esther to risk her life for her people by going into the king uninvited, Mordecai suggested that she may have been born for just such a time. He said, "If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

Those words remind us that God's purposes are larger than any one individual, yet He chooses to work through willing servants. Esther's decision was not driven by certainty of survival but by trust in God's providence. She fasted and then stepped forward in faith, saying, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

Of course, the story bears out that she was born for a storm (cf. Romans 8:28). God used her courage to turn impending tragedy into deliverance.

Do you know this Bible story? (Answer the questions on the previous page to learn more about Esther.)

Reading the Bible is interesting!

The Bible tells the greatest story ever told—the story of God and man. It is not a dry collection of religious rules, but a living record of real people facing real problems, just like we do. In its pages we meet kings and shepherds, prophets and fishermen, heroes of faith and men who failed miserably yet found forgiveness. We read of love stronger than death, faith that overcomes fear, and hope that shines brightest in dark times. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible explains where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going.

—Based on an idea by Wade Webster

"Your word is a lamp to my feet."

PSALM 119:105

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

Recommended **Resource**



Faith and resilience are the driving forces behind the series **"Tempered."** These ladies share their stories of trauma, loss, and the profound ways their beliefs carried them through the darkest of times with honesty and courage. **https://shorturl.at/xDKDw**

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

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

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

_____

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☐ In Pursuit of Compassion



☐ Jesus Never Watched Sheep, but He Is the Good Shepherd



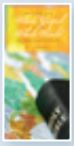
☐ Is Being a Good Person Enough?



☐ Odd Odds to Bet On



☐ I Bet You Didn't Know This About Lotteries



☐ We Can Get the Whole Gospel to the Whole World in One Generation



☐ Why Caleb Lived on a Mountain



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VOLUME 31:11

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Chapter to Chapter
1 KINGS

This chart is part of a memory system for learning the key people, events, topics, and verses of all 929 Old Testament chapters.

INTRODUCTION

First Kings records the death of David, the reign of Solomon, the building of the temple, and the division of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms. Traditionally connected with Jeremiah, the book covers circa 970–850 B.C. Its major themes include wisdom, worship, obedience, idolatry, and the consequences of departing from God.

CHAPTER/TOPICS	VERSES
1. Solomon is made king	1:39
2. David dies, and Solomon is established	2:10–12
3. Solomon asks for wisdom	3:9
4. Solomon's wisdom and prosperity	4:29
5. Preparations for the temple	5:5
6. Solomon builds the temple	6:14
7. Palace and temple furnishings	7:51
8. Solomon's prayer of dedication	8:27
9. God appears to Solomon again	9:2–9
10. The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon	10:9
11. Solomon turns to idolatry	11:4
Divided Kingdom	
12. Kingdom divided	12:16
13. A man of God prophesies against Jeroboam	13:2
14. Jeroboam's sin and judgment	14:16
15. Good and bad kings in the divided kingdom	15:3, 11
16. Ahab becomes king	16:29–30
17. Elijah and the widow of Zarephath	17:24
18. Elijah on Mount Carmel	18:11–21
19. Elijah flees; Elisha called	19:19
20. Ahab defeats Syria	20:28
21. Ahab steals Naboth's vineyard	21:19
22. Ahab dies in battle	22:37





The Resurrection of Jesus

The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. If Jesus had remained in the tomb, His promises would have died with Him. But He rose, just as He said He would (Matthew 28:6), proving that He is the Son of God (Romans 1:4). Paul proclaimed, "But now Christ is risen from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:20), making death a defeated enemy. Jesus' rising proves His claims, confirms His power over sin and death, and secures our hope of new life.

The resurrection was verified by eyewitnesses. Paul reminded the Corinthians that the risen Christ appeared to more than five hundred people at once, "of whom the greater part remain to the present" (1 Corinthians 15:6). In other words, first-century readers could still speak with those who saw Him alive. When Peter preached in Acts 2, he boldly declared that David's tomb was still occupied, but Jesus' was empty. "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32). If Peter had been mistaken, his audience could have easily refuted him by pointing to Jesus' body—but they could not.

The empty tomb changed everything. Because He lives, we have hope beyond death, assurance beyond doubt, and purpose beyond this life. The resurrection declares that Jesus is Lord, and that eternal life is found in Him alone. —Matt Wallin

House to House
Heart to Heart
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You Are Worthy

Many people look at their lives and think, "God could never forgive me." They replay their failures and convince themselves they are not good enough to be Christians. But the truth is, not one person was ever good enough alone—and that is exactly why Jesus came.

When Jesus chose His followers, He did not look for perfect people. He called fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot, and other ordinary men and women. They made mistakes, argued, doubted, and sometimes failed spectacularly. Yet Jesus still loved them, forgave them, and used them to change the world.

Paul once thought he was too far gone. He had persecuted the church and even approved of Christians being killed. Later he wrote, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). But listen to what he said next: "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life" (1:16). Paul's story proves that no one is beyond God's reach.

You do not have to fix your life before coming to Jesus. You come to Him, and He begins the work of fixing you (Ephesians 2:10). God does not see you as worthless—He sees you as redeemable, valuable, and loveable. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

You are not disqualified by your past (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). In Christ, you can be washed, sanctified, and justified (6:11). That is what makes the good news of the gospel so good—it is for everyone who is willing to come.

If you would like to learn what it means to receive that forgiveness and begin again, we would love to study with you. We are not perfect—none of us is—but we are striving to follow the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25) and the perfect example of Jesus.

Become part of a community of people whom God has made worthy, and discover how He can make you new today! —Matt Wallin

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