

## Facilitator Notes for "Knowing God by Name"

### Lesson 15 – Yahweh Tsidkenu – The LORD Our Righteousness - Jeremiah 23:1-6

PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.

## Questions

Read Jeremiah 23:1-6.

1. For now, these verses are lifted out of context, but from what is said in **23:1-2**, what can you surmise about the present condition of God's people and the leaders who rule them?

God's people are like scattered sheep, unsafe and vulnerable to the point of being destroyed. They have been abandoned by their leaders (shepherds). Jeremiah, speaking for God, says that the leaders have scattered the sheep of God's pasture and have not taken care of them so that they in danger of being destroyed.

- ♥ What positive and negative effects can leaders have on those they lead? Do you think it is fair that God holds leaders responsible for the condition of the people they lead? Why or why not?
  - ♥ When was a time when you were under "good" leadership? "Bad" leadership? What specific impact did each of these leaders have on you? For you, what defines a "good" or "bad" leader?
2. From what you read in **23:4-6**, what is God's description of a good leader?  
Good leaders tends and takes care of the people they lead. They watch out for the one who might be "lost" or is not fitting in well with the group. Good leaders lead with godly wisdom and they are fair and just – not showing partiality for favorites. Good leaders are righteous – right with God themselves – so they can do what is right and just. A good leader watches out for the safety of those they lead.
- ♥ What present day examples can you think of where leaders tend to act like shepherds and people tend to act like sheep? There are many levels of leadership: Parents to children; pastors/priests to parishioners; leading small groups within the body of Christ; community leaders; local, state and national leaders; social or cultural leaders, etc. A leader wouldn't be a leader unless they have someone to lead. People tend to look for a leader in all these situations – and leaders do have a certain power and responsibility to those they lead. When have you seen a "shepherd" lead the "sheep" astray or a "shepherd" take advantage of the "sheep?" What should "sheep" do when this happens? God has instructed us to follow and respect our leaders, whether it be in the church or the government. However, when leaders command or lead us to go against God's laws, we are to obey God rather than other people (Acts 5:29). It is not wrong to question our leaders – we don't follow blindly. Submitting to leadership does not mean we stop thinking for ourselves or give up personal responsibility before God.
  - ♥ Whom has God placed in your care and to whom are you a "shepherd?" Do you feel you are accountable to God for those you lead or care for? Why or why not?
  - ♥ The name of God we will study is this lesson is *The LORD Our Righteousness (23:6)*. What comes to mind when you hear the word "righteous" or "righteousness." Why would this be an important trait for a leader? There is built within every human the desire to have things right, fair, and just. This is part of our being created in the image or likeness of God. We have an unconscious desire to have our leaders be the kind of person and leader that God is to us.

**Historical Background** - As we have seen in these lessons, God delivered his people from slavery in Egypt and led them to Canaan, the Promised Land, making them his very own nation, ruled and governed by his commands and laws. Israel was to be a nation different from all the nations of the world, acknowledging and worshipping the one, true God, *Yahweh*. Through Israel, *Yahweh* was going to bless all the nations of the world by sending the Messiah, a Savior, who would provide for the reuniting of all people's back to God, their Creator. For this reason, it was very important that Israel, as a nation, remain faithful to *Yahweh*, loving and obeying him and living life as he prescribed. When Israel strayed, God would raise up a judge or leader or king or prophet who would call the people to repentance and lead them back to God.

**Jeremiah** was a prophet sent by God to speak to the kingdom of Judah, calling them to repentance and warning them of what would happen if they continued in disobedience. For 40 years Jeremiah pleaded with the people to return to God – and warned them what would happen if they didn't – but hardly anyone listened. Because of his message, he was rejected by family, friends and neighbors, laughed at by those he was trying to save, and even thrown into prison when the king got tired of hearing him. Jeremiah is often called the "*weeping prophet*" because he wept and grieved deeply as he shared God's heart of brokenness over the sins of his people. Read about Jeremiah's call in **Jer. 1:1-10**.

3. Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, what two choices did Moses give God's people and what were the consequences of each choice (**Deuteronomy 30:15-18**)?

They could choose life and prosperity by choosing to love God and obey his commands about how to live life or they could choose death and destruction letting their heart turn away from God, choosing to disobey by serving and worshipping other gods. If they chose life and prosperity, God would bless them in their new land. If they chose death and destruction, they would be destroyed and would not live long in the Promised Land.

- ♥ Why did God let the people choose whether or not they would obey God's commands instead of just making them obey? God is Love – and the very nature of love says there has to be a choice to love. Even God cannot force someone to love him – because then it wouldn't be love. Love has to be freely given or else it is not love. Love is always a risk – even for God. Are we given the same choice today? Why or why not? Yes, we are given the very same choice – to love or not love, to obey or not obey, to follow or go off on our own.
  - ♥ Why does God give us "rules" – do's and don'ts – to live by? Are these "rules" for his benefit or ours? How so? God's rules are ALWAYS for our benefit. If he tells us "no, don't do that" or "live this way and not that way", it is only for our own good. We may not see it right away, but choosing to disobey or live our own way will harm, hurt, and eventually destroy us. God doesn't "need" our obedience – we "need" obedience. Satan's number one ploy is to deceive us on this point. He tempts us to believe that it doesn't matter or that it won't hurt us or that there won't be any bad consequences. Disobedience ALWAYS hurts us and usually hurts others too. What is your general attitude towards God's "rules?" Why?
  - ♥ What are some of God's "rules" that we are to live by today? Scripture is full of God's instructions on how to live life and that is why knowing God's Word is so important. Specifically, there is the 10 commandments, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and other teachings of Jesus in the Gospels and Paul's instructions to the early church on how to live life found in his Epistles. What, would you say, are some blessings of obedience and some dangers of disobedience?
4. Jeremiah stood alone, speaking for God, during the reign of the last five kings of Judah, all of whom except one, "did evil in the eyes of the LORD." According to **2 Kings 21:1-6**, what, specifically, were some of the sins of the "shepherds" (kings) of Judah?

They did the same ungodly and unholy things that the pagan nations did that God had already judged driving them out of the Promised Land or destroying them. The kings and prophets of Israel began to worship like the pagans did – building special altars and shrines. They worshiped creation instead of the Creator. They even brought these pagan practices into the temple of God – where God's Presence dwelt in the holy of holies – the very place that God has set aside for Himself to live and be with his people. They sacrificed their own children to false gods and practiced all sorts of sorcery and divination, consulting mediums and psychics. Just as when a spouse is unfaithful to their marriage, thereby destroying the relationship, so God's people committed spiritual adultery. They chose to "sleep" with the Enemy.

- ♥ How important is it that our leaders (shepherds) today obey God's commands and live life as God prescribes? Leadership – civic and religious – is a moral issue, according to Jeremiah. The people have been betrayed by their leaders and they suffer for it. Leadership, whether in the government or in the faith community, is a divine vocation, a spiritual responsibility. The sins of the rulers, the dignitaries, and those in power receive special attention and particular

condemnation because of the power a leader holds over those they lead. We, in our country, often have some power to pick our leaders, but this is usually not the case. Leaders, both civic and religious, are held to a high standard of accountability because leadership is a high vocation; leaders are accountable to God (Hebrews 13:17). Leaders (teachers) will be judged more strictly because of the authority they have over those they lead. (Generally speaking, God commands us to submit and follow our leaders.) Jesus had some very hard words to say to the bad religious and civil leaders of his day, calling them snakes and hypocrites (Matthew 23). For a leader, God does not see a difference in "private" and "public" morality (doing right or wrong). In our country, for example, behavior in the **bedroom** or **boardroom**, ethics in the **House of Representatives** or at our **house** is all a matter of fidelity or infidelity to God. What are we to do if they don't? What can we learn from Jeremiah's example? We are to pray for those in authority over us (1 Timothy 2:1-4), obeying and submitting when we can. However, we are always held to the standard of obeying God if leaders command us to do wrong. Jeremiah said and did what God commanded him to do, even when his leaders tried to silence him and even kill him.

- ♥ How would you define idolatry? An idol is anything we love or becomes more important to us than God. In the New Testament, the term idolatry began to be used as an intellectual concept, rather than an actual bowing down to a statue or some other image. Idolatry is the replacement of God in the mind, heart and affections of the worshipper. As soon as anything comes between us and God, it is an idol. In addition to material objects such as houses, land, and cars, idols can be people, popular heroes or celebrities, or those whom we love. Objects of worship can even include things like fame, reputation, hobbies, pride, and deeds done in the name of the Lord.

Why is God opposed to it (2 Corinthians 6:14-16)? Idolatry is a deceitful and dangerous sin. Humans are "wired" (created) to obey the thing or person we worship. We **cannot** have two masters. We were created to be the temple (dwelling place) of God and when we love something more than God we are trying to partner goodness with wickedness and light with darkness. Idolatry will destroy our souls and hearts. God hates it because it harms and destroys us! What are some present day idols (Colossian 3:5; Ephesians 5:5)? As well as the things mentioned in the above Heart question, these verses mention "being greedy for the good things of this life (loving and desiring them more than God). A person who wants more and more of what the world offers worships the things of this life instead of God.

How do we "get rid" of an idol? How is idolatry like "spiritual" adultery (Jeremiah 3:19-20)? How does unfaithfulness affect a relationship?

- ♥ In **Leviticus 19:31** and **Deuteronomy 18:9-13**, God's people were expressly told not to have anything to do with mediums, spiritists, psychics, sorcery, witchcraft or fortune-telling. Are these commands for us today? Why or why not? Why is God opposed to these things and to what can these practices lead?

Occult practices are strictly forbidden by God – because of the harm they can do us. The powers in occult practices are real and they are not from God. Occult practices demonstrate a lack of faith in God (trusting him with our future), often involve sinful actions and open the door to demonic influences. Today, many books, TV shows and games emphasize fortune-telling, séances, and other occult practices. These are counterfeits of God's power and have at their root a system of beliefs totally opposed to God. Satan is always behind the occult and often our interest in these things comes from a desire to know and control the future. Any information Satan offers is distorted or completely false. With the trustworthy guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Bible and the church, we don't need to turn to occult sources for information or entertainment.

5. Just like Israel and Judah, we all sin and wander away from God. When we do, what is it that God desires us to do (Jeremiah 3:11-14)?

God wants us to "come home" – back to him, acknowledge our sin, admit we have rebelled against God and confess that we chose not to follow God and have not obeyed him. If we do this, God will be merciful and forgive us and restore us.

♥ We see that sin and disobedience provokes or arouses God's anger (**Jeremiah 3:12; 2 Kings 21:6**). Can you think of some reasons why this is so? God hates sin and becomes "angry" because of what sin does to us. God's anger is not "at" us, but "for" us. Sin destroys us and God will always take a unrelenting stand against it. God is against sin and angry at it because he is for us. God is not indecisive when it comes to sin, because he is "fiercely and forcefully opposed to the things that destroy his people." God's anger against sin is an act of love. He is taking action for our good.

Is God's anger like human anger? Why or why not? Not always, but often, human anger is a sinful response to our pride being hurt. Human anger will also often lead to sin because it is so easy for us to lose control over our thoughts, words and actions. God's anger or wrath is never an out-of-control emotional response. It is not a reckless and irrational passion. God's anger is a "mindful, objective, rational response" to evil and sin. Anger is not an essential or permanent characteristic of God. God's anger is aroused by sin because of the damage sin causes. When sin and death are, at last, completely defeated, there will be no reason for God's anger at sin. God's essential character is love and he will be love for all eternity. God's essential character is NOT anger – and there will be no reason for his anger as we live eternally with him.

- ♥ Josiah was a good king during Jeremiah's time, who, when confronted with God's Word, showed his repentance by tearing his robes (**2 Kings 22:11, 19**) and instituting immediate reforms (**2 Kings 23**). We don't "tear our robes" today, but how do we repent, showing sorrow for our sins (**Acts 3:19; James 4:8-10; 1 John 1:8-10**)? What has repentance looked like in your life? What is the purpose of repentance?
- ♥ What comfort does **Psalm 103:8-14** give when it comes to disobedience, confession and repentance?
6. Despite all of Jeremiah's warnings, the shepherds of Israel refused to repent and return to God. What were the consequences of their continued disobedience (**Jeremiah 25:8-11**)?

God was going to use King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia to come against Judah and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. God said he would completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and contempt and ruin forever. There will be no more happiness or joy and the entire land will become a wasteland. Israel will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years.

- ♥ Is God warning you about anything? Are you paying more attention than Judah did? How has God warned you in the past? How did you respond?
- ♥ God used Judah's ungodly enemy, Babylon, to bring judgment on his people for their disobedience. Was this fair? Why or why not? How does this show the power of *El Elyon* and *Yahweh Sabaoth*? *El Elyon* means the Most High God who is sovereign over all that exists. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar, at the end of his life said, *"the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men; All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. Not one can hold back his hand or say to him: What have you done?"* *Yahweh Sabaoth* means the Lord of Hosts – and God is Lord over all the hosts of angels, humans, etc., using them for his purposes and plans.
- ♥ God judged Judah for the sins of *idolatry*, *immorality* and *injustice*. Are these sins a problem in our country? Do you think we will be judged someday (**Psalm 96:9-10**)? If so, what might this judgment look like? Is there anything, as individuals, that we can do?

From the time God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt, giving them his Law and making them his nation, to the time when they were taken into captivity by Babylon (a period of about 800 years), the Israelites were never able to completely live up to God's standards of righteousness – "To love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commands, decrees and laws" (**Deuteronomy 30:16**). As a nation they failed and as individuals they failed – just as every nation and individual has failed throughout all of history. God's pure and holy character is the standard by which righteousness is measured. Fallen, sinful human beings will *never* be able to attain or achieve God's righteous standard by their own efforts, no matter how sincerely try (**Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:10-12**). For this reason, God announced through Jeremiah that at some point in the future, he was going to make a *new* covenant (agreement) with his people that would *not* rely on *human performance*. Instead, God said, *"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people . . . They will know me and I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more"* (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**).

7. Read **Jeremiah 23:1-6** again. What hope and promise did God give his people even though they were reaping the consequences of their disobedience?

God promises to gather again his people from wherever they have been driven and bring them back home where they will be fruitful and increase in number. He will appoint responsible leaders for them and they will never be afraid again. Not a single person will be lost or missing. He will raise up a King to rule them – a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right. Under the reign of this King, Judah and Israel will be saved and will live in safety.

♥ God has promised King David that his royal line and throne would last forever. Who is the King that God will raise up "who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land" (23:5)? This King is obviously Jesus, the Messiah (Savior). Is he ruling now? Yes, but he has not enforced his complete victory. His rule is the Kingdom of God – where what God wants done is done. How so? When will his kingdom be made complete? When Jesus returns to earth and establishes his fair, just and wise Kingdom – often call the Millennial Reign of Christ (Revelation 20:1-6). Satan will be bound Jesus will rule the whole world with justice and righteousness.

♥ What is implied in God's name *The LORD Our Righteousness*? In other words, how is the name *The LORD Our Righteousness* different from a name like *The LORD, the Righteous One*?"

The Name the Lord OUR Righteousness not only says that the Lord is righteous (which we would expect) but that his righteousness becomes OUR righteousness.

#### JESUS – YAHWEH TSIDKENU – THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

8. Righteousness means *to be right with God*. Read **Romans 3:20-22** in both the NIV and NLT. Under the new covenant, how is righteousness *not attained* and how is it *now obtained*?

To be right with God cannot be achieved or attained by obeying God's commands. Rather it is obtained (acquired, secured) by **trusting in Jesus Christ** to take away our sins through his death (which destroyed death) and his resurrection (giving us new life.)

♥ There is something we must *do* to be right with God – but it is not trying to be good or trying to keep God's law. What must every person do to be *righteous – right with God* (**Romans 3:22; Ephesians 2:8-9**)? Are you *right with God*? How do you know? Will anything ever change your status?

♥ Discuss the meaning of this statement with your small group: *Righteousness cannot be attained, but it can be obtained*. (A dictionary might help with word meanings.)

♥ How does **2 Corinthians 5:21** sum up God's name, *Yahweh Tsidkenu – The LORD our Righteousness*? God made Jesus, who never sinned, to become sin for us.

How did Christ become "sin for us?" When Christ, who was sinless, died on the cross, he defeated sin and death and reversed the effects of sin in our lives. He reversed the "irreversible" damage that sin has caused in us all. How are we made right with God? We must believe that that Jesus did this for us – and accept his sacrifice in our place. We must choose to turn from our sins (repent) and live out of the new life he puts in us. Is there any other way? There is no other way to be right with God – to have a right standing before him.

#### ♥ Heart Therapy

*Willing Obedience* – We cannot earn our right standing with God, but once we have been made *righteous* through faith in Christ, we, out of gratitude and because we are brand new persons in Christ, are called to obedience. God's *do's and don'ts* are given solely for our good and if we continue to knowingly disregard or disobey God's commands, we put ourselves in harm's way and wreak havoc on our souls. Obedience is also necessary if we want to stay vitally connected to Christ's love. Jesus will always love us, no matter what, but we will not *feel or experience* the wonders of his love unless we obey his commands (**John 15:10**). Obedience is also the way we show Jesus our love for him (**John 14:15**). For the Christ-follower, our goal is not merely to *do* what God says, but through obedience to *become* – more and more – *like Jesus*.

*Self-examination* – Block out some time to be alone with God. Consider the following Scriptures and do an *obedience check*. Where are you living *your way* and not *God's way*? What is the Spirit saying to you?

Exodus 20:1-17    Matthew 5:21-7:6    Ephesians 4:17-5:4    Galatians 5:16-25    1 John 1:8-10

BELOW IS THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURE FOR THIS LESSON THAT CAN BE PRINTED OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME

## NIV

**Deuteronomy 30:15-18** See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. **16** For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

**17** But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, **18** I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

**2Kings 21:1-6** Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah. **2** He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. **3** He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. **4** He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name." **5** In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts.

**6** He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

**2Corinthians 6:14-16** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

**Colossians 3:5** Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

**Ephesians 5:5** For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

**Jeremiah 3:19-20** "I myself said, "How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation." I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.

**20** But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel," declares the LORD.

**Leviticus 19:31** "Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

**Deuteronomy 18:9-13** When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. **10** Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, **11** or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. **12** Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. **13** You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

**Jeremiah 3:11-14** The LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. **12** Go, proclaim

this message toward the north: "'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD, 'I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,' declares the LORD, 'I will not be angry forever. **13** Only acknowledge your guilt—you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,'" declares the LORD. **14** "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion.

**Acts 3:19** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

**James 4:8-10** Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

**10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

**1John 1:8-10** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

**Psalms 103:8-14** The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. **9** He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; **10** he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. **11** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; **12** as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. **13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; **14** for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

**Jeremiah 25:8-11** Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, **9** I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the LORD, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. **10** I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. **11** This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

**Psalms 96:9-10** Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. **10** Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

**Romans 3:20-22** Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

**21** But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **22** This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9** not by works, so that no one can boast.

**2Corinthians 5:21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

NLT

**Deuteronomy 30:15-18** “Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between prosperity and disaster, between life and death. **16** I have commanded you today to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, laws, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and become a great nation, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. **17** But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, **18** then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

**2Kings 21:1-6** Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother was Hephzibah. **2** He did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, imitating the detestable practices of the pagan nations whom the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. **3** He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed. He constructed altars for Baal and set up an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. He also bowed before all the forces of heaven and worshiped them. **4** He even built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place where the LORD had said his name should be honored. **5** He built these altars for all the forces of heaven in both courtyards of the LORD’s Temple. **6** Manasseh even sacrificed his own son in the fire. He practiced sorcery and divination, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the LORD’s sight, arousing his anger.

**2Corinthians 6:14-16** Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? **15** What harmony can there be between Christ and the Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? **16** And what union can there be between God’s temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: “I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

**Colossians 3:5** So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don’t be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry.

**Ephesians 5:5** You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is really an idolater who worships the things of this world.

**Jeremiah 3:19-20** “I thought to myself, ‘I would love to treat you as my own children!’ I wanted nothing more than to give you this beautiful land—the finest inheritance in the world. I looked forward to your calling me ‘Father,’ and I thought you would never turn away from me again. **20** But you have betrayed me, you people of Israel! You have been like a faithless wife who leaves her husband,” says the LORD.

**Leviticus 19:31** “Do not rely on mediums and psychics, for you will be defiled by them. I, the LORD, am your God.

**Jeremiah 3:11-14** Then the LORD said to me, “Even faithless Israel is less guilty than treacherous Judah!

**12** Therefore, go and say these words to Israel, ‘This is what the LORD says: O Israel, my faithless people, come home to me again, for I am merciful. I will not be angry with you forever. **13** Only acknowledge your guilt. Admit that you rebelled against the LORD your God and committed adultery against him by worshiping idols under every green tree.

Confess that you refused to follow me. I, the LORD, have spoken!” **14** “Return home, you wayward children,” says the LORD, “for I am your husband. I will bring you again to the land of Israel—one from here and two from there, from wherever you are scattered.

**Acts 3:19** Now turn from your sins and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins.

**James 4:8-10** Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. **9** Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. **10** When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.

**1John 1:8-10** If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. **9** But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. **10** If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

**Psalms 103:8-14** The LORD is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love. **9** He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. **10** He has not punished us for all our sins, nor does he deal with us as we deserve. **11** For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. **12** He has removed our rebellious acts as far away from us as the east is from the west. **13** The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. **14** For he understands how weak we are; he knows we are only dust.

**Jeremiah 25:8-11** And now the LORD Almighty says: Because you have not listened to me, **9** I will gather together all the armies of the north under King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, whom I have appointed as my deputy. I will bring them all against this land and its people and against the other nations near you. I will completely destroy you and make you an object of horror and contempt and a ruin forever. **10** I will take away your happy singing and laughter. The joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides will no longer be heard. Your businesses will fail, and all your homes will stand silent and dark. **11** This entire land will become a desolate wasteland. Israel and her neighboring lands will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

**Psalms 96:9-10** Worship the LORD in all his holy splendor. Let all the earth tremble before him. **10** Tell all the nations that the LORD is king. The world is firmly established and cannot be shaken. He will judge all peoples fairly.

**Romans 3:20-22** For no one can ever be made right in God’s sight by doing what his law commands. For the more we know God’s law, the clearer it becomes that we aren’t obeying it.

**21** But now God has shown us a different way of being right in his sight—not by obeying the law but by the way promised in the Scriptures long ago. **22** We are made right in God’s sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done.

**Ephesians 2:8** God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. **9** Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

**2Corinthians 5:21** For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.