

Sin and Its Consequences:

30 Lessons from the Old Testament

All glory belongs to my Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has redeemed my soul from the power of sin and death by His blood.

All scripture quotations are taken from the King James Bible.



Sin and Its Consequences:
30 Lessons from the Old Testament

1. Adam – Sin separates us from our Creator.
2. Eve – Sin promises great things it can't deliver.
3. Cain – Sin makes a reality of our greatest fear.
4. Lamech – Sin makes a boast of itself.
5. Ham – Sin mocks others and brings a curse upon self.
6. Babel – Sin causes confusion.
7. Abram – Sin delays God's promise.
8. Lot – Sin chooses convenience at a high cost.
9. Lot's Wife – Sin treasures temporal things over deliverance.
10. Esau – Sin thinks only of the moment and not of eternity.
11. Reuben – Sin removes our blessing.
12. Nadab and Abihu – Sin makes religious service abominable.
13. Aaron and Miriam – Sin envies others' fellowship with God.
14. Achan – Sin makes victory impossible.
15. Balaam – Sin finds a way to compromise virtue.
16. Samson – Sin removes all strength.
17. Jabesh-Gilead – Sin makes a spiritual pacifist.
18. Eli – Sin makes God turn his back on a people.
19. Saul – Sin attempts to justify disobedience.
20. David – Sin thoroughly breaks the soul.
21. Joab – Sin will not go unpunished forever.
22. Solomon – Sin ruins a good name.
23. Ahab – Sin destroys a family.
24. Gehazi – Sin is not content with godliness.
25. Uzziah – Sin casts us from the house of God.
26. Jonah – Sin makes silent witnesses.
27. Hezekiah – Sin makes us complacent towards future judgments.
28. Jehoiakim – Sin removes us from God's book.
29. Nebuchadnezzar – Sin diminishes our understanding.
30. Haman – Sin brings death upon itself.

Day One: Adam
Sin Separates Us From Our Creator

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”
- Genesis 3:9

God’s instructions to Adam after He had created him included only one restriction: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was off limits. If Adam ate from the fruit of that tree, it would spell his death.

Adam couldn’t keep himself from taking the forbidden fruit and, once he did, he was immediately filled with shame. He and his wife tried to cover their nakedness on their own and, when they heard the voice of the Lord, they hid themselves from God’s presence. Adam said, “I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” (Gen. 3:10)

Critics of the Bible like to scoff at the all-knowing God asking Adam “where are you,” but they misunderstand the point. God knew where Adam was, but He was causing Adam to understand that his sin had created a rift between him and his Creator. This is a point that we seem to have missed today.

God is absolutely pure and perfect. His commandments are not to restrict liberty but to promote it. God wants the very best for us. That’s the whole point of the tree being the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” We think of “evil” being wicked or sinful, but it cannot mean that in this context because God says, “Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil...” (Gen. 3:22) “Evil,” then, must not mean sinful because God cannot sin. Instead, evil just simply means “bad,” or “not good.” We know that Satan had already rebelled against God because he is the one who tempted Eve. There was already an enemy of God out in the world that wanted to ruin man. So long as man left this tree alone then they would have only known the good things God had to give.

May we remember that our sin ruins our fellowship with the God who created us. His desire for us is that we only know the good and never the evil.

Day 2: Eve
Sin Promises Great Things It Can't Deliver

*“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened,
and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

- Genesis 3:5

The temptation of Satan to Eve was, in essence, “God is just trying to keep you down. If you eat this fruit then your knowledge will be complete and, consequently, you’ll have more power than you ever would otherwise.”

This is the prevailing message today. The thought is that God’s way is unnecessarily difficult or cumbersome. However, God’s commandment here was for the *protection* of man’s liberty. Satan had convinced Eve that, if she disobeyed God, she would be free. What he didn’t tell her was that sin was going to be a snare to trap her and chains to bind her.

Sin promises freedom but makes us captives. Sin will assure you of wealth, but it will rob you blind. Sin entices with strength, but it only gives weakness. Sin tells you that following your own reasoning and doing what feels right is the way to go, but in the end, it brings death. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Prov. 14:12)

Eve reasoned with herself concerning this forbidden fruit. She “saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes...” (Gen. 3:6) She began to list all its pleasant attributes, but she forgot the warning of the Lord: “ye shall surely die.” Sin looks good. It feels good. We can reason it out a thousand different ways in our minds as to why this or that thing “isn’t that bad” even when the Bible gives us stern warnings against it.

May we remember that sin promises us the world, but it will only steal, kill, and destroy. No matter how pleasing the fruit looks, if it’s forbidden, trust that God knows more than you do and just walk away.

Day 3: Cain
Sin Makes A Reality Of Our Greatest Fears

“But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”

- Genesis 4:5

Cain was the oldest son of Adam and Eve. There came a time where he and his younger brother, Abel, both brought offerings to the Lord. Cain grew crops and Abel raised livestock. Cain brought an offering out of the crops he grew and Abel sacrificed an animal out of his flock. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but He rejected Cain.

The immediate question we have is “why didn't God receive Cain? If he was sincere in his gift, isn't that all that matters?” The Bible teaches us that “without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. 9:22) The just consequence for sin is death. “The wages of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23) It is what we rightly deserve for offending the Perfect Creator who has given to us all good things. God cannot just “not judge” sin. He is righteous. He HAS to condemn sin, but He is also loving and merciful and wants to forgive sin. The way through this conundrum is that the blood of something innocent must be shed for us if God is going to rightly forgive sin. A penalty is due that only blood can satisfy. All the blood offerings in the Old Testament picture the blood that God's only begotten Son shed for us on the cross. “And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (I John 1:7) The ultimate reason why God had respect to Abel's sacrifice and not to Cain's was because Abel's sacrifice was a blood sacrifice whereas Cain's wasn't.

Nobody wants to be rejected. Cain was disappointed and angry that his sacrifice didn't please God. He allowed that anger to be turned against his brother and so, he killed Abel out of jealousy. Cain didn't want to be rejected but his sin made sure that he was utterly cast out. If we want to be accepted of God we must come through the blood of Jesus. It doesn't matter how good your intentions are, sin will always drive us further away from God, ensuring our greatest fear.

Day 4: Lamech
Sin Makes A Boast of Itself

“...Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: For I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.”

- Genesis 4:24-25

Cain was cursed after he killed his brother. God put a mark on him to ensure that no one killed him so that he had to live under the consequences of his actions. God promised to judge anyone who killed Cain seven times as harshly as He had dealt with Cain. Cain went out and established a city calling it after the name of his son, Enoch.

Several generations later there came a man by the name Lamech. We don't know the whole story, but we know that Lamech took another man's life just like Cain did. He had married two wives and came in to them boasting of his murderous act. He had retaliated against someone who had offended him and had taken his life.

His boast rings out as you can almost hear him singing, “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.” Lamech wasn't concerned about the consequences of his actions at all. Instead, he boasted that his sin had made him greater than Cain and that God judge anyone that would raise their hand against him. He made a name for himself because of his sin, and he wanted his wives and the whole world to know how great he was.

It is crazy to think that, when man was closest to God and first sinned, the realization of sin made Adam hide himself in shame. Contrast that with our example here of Lamech and you see that there is no longer any shame in sin. Sin should drive us low before the Lord and make us repent; but, if we allow it to run its full course, it will instead raise its head high and boast of its own greatness.

May the Lord help us to never get to the place where we boast in the greatness of our sin. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord and ask Him to deliver us.

Day 5: Ham
Sin Mocks Others And Brings A Curse Upon Itself

“And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren.”

- Genesis 9:22

The sin of man became so great that God had to judge the whole Earth in a world-wide flood. God spared the human race by having mercy on Noah and his family by instructing Noah to build an Ark. When the rain came, they were kept safely inside.

After the waters receded and they were allowed to come out of the ark, Noah began a vineyard. One night he drank wine that had been fermented and passed out in his tent. Noah, lying naked in his tent, was found by his son. Instead of helping his father, Ham goes out and tells his two brothers about their father's nakedness. The other brother, Shem and Japheth, spread a garment between them and walked backwards over their father to cover him up. When Noah woke up and realized what had happened, he was very upset with Ham. He said, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” (Gen. 9:25)

When Ham saw that his father was in a shameful position he immediately went out and told someone else. It is very easy for us to do the same thing. We point out the faults and failures of other people instead of helping to restore them to a right relationship with God. When we do this, we ensure a curse upon ourselves just like Ham did. Instead, we should seek for a way to deal with that person the same way that we would hope to be treated if it were our nakedness that needed covered.

Sin will always convince you that your sin isn't as great as another person's. It will be hyper-critical and lack all compassion. It will laugh at another person when they are down instead of helping them. May the Lord help us to realize that our job is to call people to being reconciled to God instead of condemning them in their shame. Afterall, isn't that what Jesus has done for us?

Day 6: Babel Sin Causes Confusion

“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”

- Genesis 11:7

Amazing things can happen when people put their minds together. After the population had increased quite a bit after the flood, all the people got together and decided to build a tower that would reach heaven. The sin was not that they wanted to build a tower, but that they wanted to make a name for themselves. They wanted everyone in the world to know that they had accomplished something great and they wanted to be praised for it. When men become full of pride in their accomplishments it turns the amazing into awful.

Up until this point in history there was only one language. There was no language barrier to overcome. God saw the pride of man and determined to do something about it. He went and confounded the language of man so that they couldn’t understand each other like they had before. The result was that the lofty tower was abandoned and men scattered upon the face of the Earth.

We must remember that everything God does and allows to happen is calculated to bring us back into fellowship with Him. The curse that was pronounced on Adam and Eve reminded them that they needed to be reconciled to God. With every wipe of the hand to remove the sweat from our eyes, with every thorn that pricks us, every menstrual cramp, every heartache and trial, God is trying to communicate to us that we need to be restored to Him. If God allowed men to build this tower then they would have boasted that they didn’t need anything from God and that they were self-sufficient. We’re not self-sufficient though, and so life is really hard. There’s chaos and confusion on every side because the forces of sin are trying to keep us ensnared, but God is trying to bring us to life.

It might seem contradictory, but the Scripture says that “God is not the author of confusion.” (I Cor. 14:33) God did confound the languages of man at Babel, but the source of confusion has been and will always be sin. Sin will never bring clarity or peace. It will always leave you yearning for more than you can ever have. The tower would have never been tall enough to satisfy and so, in mercy, God scattered the people.

Day 7: Lot
Sin Chooses Convenience At A High Cost

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where... and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.”

- Genesis 13:10, 12

Abram, who we will consider next, took his nephew, Lot, with him when God called him out of his homeland. The Lord was faithful to bless Abram and all who travelled with him. There came a time when Lot's servants and Abram's servants started fighting amongst themselves and Abram suggested that he and Lot split ways. He told Lot to go in one direction and he would go in the opposite. Lot took a good look at his surroundings and noticed that the plain of Jordan was lush, vibrant, and well-watered and so, he chose to go in that direction.

The sin of Lot was not in choosing to go where he knew his servants and livestock would have their needs met. The issue was that the direction he chose brought him closer and closer to the city of Sodom which was full of men who were “wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.” (Gen. 13:13) Sin has a way of keeping itself at a distance for a while but will draw us in one little step at a time. This certainly was the case with Lot.

The next time we see Lot he is dwelling in Sodom. A war breaks out among several different cities and Lot is taken hostage. Abram rises up, taking his armed servants to save his nephew from bondage. After this daring rescue, Lot returns to Sodom and the next time we find him he is sitting at the gate of Sodom. The gates of the cities were, in a sense, the “town hall.” It was the place where business was done, so the fact that Lot is sitting at the gate of Sodom tells us that he has become a nobleman, of sorts, in this city which is filled with wickedness.

The New Testament tells us that Lot “vexed his righteous soul” by staying in Sodom. (II Peter 2:8) Lot was a man who knew the Lord but, because he chose to head in a direction that looked lush and vibrant, he found himself in a place of misery. It would do us well to remember that the pathway of righteousness is not an easy one. The grass certainly looks better on the other side of the fence, but it's only a matter of time before fire falls from heaven to burn it all up.

Day 8: Abram
Sin Delays God's Promises

*“And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.
And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to
Abram...”*

- Genesis 16:16 – 17:1

God called Abram to leave his family and his homeland and follow Him. Abram was promised that he would become the father of many nations. Abram was already 75 years old when God first called him. The fact that Abram believed God at 75 is impressive. His wife, Sarai, was of a comparable age to him. But after ten years their faith seemed to grow dim.

At the beginning of chapter 16, Sarai goes to Abram and tells him that for her to bare a child at her age was impossible. If there were any hope for offspring, she reasoned, he would have to father a child through another woman. This seems foreign to us today (and it should be), but it was an accepted practice of that time (not that what culture accepts is always right). Abram fathers a child through Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. The child, Ishmael, was the result of Abram's attempt to do something that only God could do. God made a mighty nation out of Ishmael, but God promised Abram AND Sarai a son.

Ishmael was born when Abram was 86. The next time that we see God speaking to Abram was thirteen years later. It is possible that God spoke to Abram during these years, but we don't have any record of that. What we do know is that the true child of promise, Isaac, was not born until Abram (whose name was changed to Abraham) was a hundred years old.

It is not unreasonable to state that Abram's lack of faith and patience resulted in God delaying the fulfillment of His promise for thirteen years. The implications of this are great for the Christian. We often get in a hurry and try to “help” God along in fulfilling His promises. Though God requires obedience and diligence from us, there are many things that we are called upon to simply wait for. We get ourselves into trouble when we get impatient and try to do in the flesh what can only be done through the Spirit. It is best to just wait on the Lord and trust that in His perfect timing He will bestow exactly what He has promised. When we sin, we delay God's promises.

Day 9: Lot's Wife
Sin Treasures Temporal Things Over Deliverance

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."
- Genesis 19:26

When the judgment of God inevitably came for Sodom, God sent angels to get His children out. Lot was told to get his family and flee the city before fire fell to consume it. They were commanded to literally run for their lives and not look back. When the fire began to fall however, Lot's wife couldn't resist the temptation to turn back and look at the destruction. Lot's wife disobeyed a direct commandment. It was sin and she was punished severely for it.

Some might criticize the strictness of the Lord on Lot's wife. Others might say in disbelief, "why did she look back? What a shame!"

First, God's judgment is always right. The fact that God was giving them opportunity to escape the city that they willingly chose to integrate themselves into is a sign of God's mercy in and of itself. Secondly, it would help us to consider a few things from the perspective of Lot's wife.

We know from the Scripture that Lot had two unmarried daughters. They fled with Lot and their mom. It is also stated clearly that Lot had "sons-in-law" which indicates that Lot and his wife had at least two daughters who were married and lived in Sodom. These daughters perished when the fire fell. Yes, it's possible that Lot's wife looked back at Sodom while thinking of all the pleasures and niceties that she was leaving behind, but she was also leaving behind people she cared for deeply who refused to heed the warning and leave with them. It's so easy to condemn and criticize but, if we were put in the same position, we would have a hard not time looking back, too.

Sodom pictures the world. Bible believers know that it is only a matter of time before God judges this world by fire. We are commanded to get up and flee the wrath to come. The angels asked the question of Lot, "hast thou here any besides?" (Gen. 19:12) In other words, "do you have anyone else you can bring with you out of this condemned city?"

We must remember the temporal nature of these things that are precious to us: our hobbies, responsibilities, possessions, friends, family, etc. Sin wants to hold on to these things and forget the fact that, one day, God will call it all into judgment.

Day 10: Esau
Sin Thinks Only Of The Moment And Not Of Eternity

“And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?”

- Genesis 25:32

God fulfilled his promise to Abraham when he was a hundred years old. Isaac was, in the consideration of God, Abraham's only son. (Gen. 22:2) Isaac grows up and has two children of his own, Esau and Jacob. These two boys were twins with Esau being the eldest. The oldest son was given something called a “birthright.” The birthright gave the oldest son the right to inherit a greater estate than his siblings.

One day Esau came in from the field and he was very hungry. Jacob had made some pottage, and Esau asked Jacob for some food. Ever looking to better his own status, Jacob offered to sell a meal to his older brother. The cost? Esau's birthright.

We could focus on Jacob's utter lack of compassion and his desire to take advantage of someone else, but we won't. Jacob learned what it was like to be taken advantage of later on in his life. The short-sightedness of Esau is what we will draw a lesson from.

Esau declared, in his hunger, that his birthright would do him no good if he didn't live long enough to receive the blessings from it. He sold his birthright for a single meal. This may not seem like anything more to us than the worst deal in history, but Esau's haste to fill his belly was nothing less than sin before God.

In despising his birthright, Esau despised the inheritance he was supposed to receive and disrespected his father, Isaac. In that moment Esau was saying that all the blessings Isaac had to give him were worth less than a bowl of pottage. Furthermore, Esau's actions showed great disdain for his own future children. What Isaac left for Esau could then be left for his own children, but he denied his family a blessing because he was hungry.

When temptation comes and it seems like we have to scratch that itch, fill that void, or satisfy that desire, we should remember Esau who caused his father, himself, and his children to suffer because of his decision to despise his birthright. We mustn't forget what we cost ourselves and those dearest to us when we yield to a temporary temptation.

Day 11: Reuben Sin Removes Our Blessing

“Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father’s bed; then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch.”

- Genesis 49:3-4

The Bible is an honest book. It details for us things as they happened and not as we wish they would have happened. We get an insight into a lot of messy details that, if it were left up to us, might have been left out.

Jacob tricked anyone and everyone he could for his own benefit. Eventually, though, God put someone in his path who could out-swindle him. Jacob falls in love with Rachel, the younger daughter of a man named Laban. Laban tricks Jacob into marrying Leah, Rachel’s older sister, before marrying Rachel. Jacob eventually has children with Leah, Rachel, and both of their handmaidens. It was definitely NOT the ideal situation, and it created a lot of problems.

Reuben was Jacob’s first son and Leah was his mother. Bilhah was the name of Rachel’s handmaiden (who Jacob fathered children with). One night Jacob heard Reuben go and lie with Bilhah.

There are a lot of admirable things spoken about Reuben. He advocated for Joseph when the rest of his brothers wanted to kill him. He was brave and strong. He was the firstborn and so, he was born into favor.

Jacob called his children together when he was getting close to death. He began to bless his children and started with Reuben. Midway through the blessing Reuben might have been feeling good about himself. “My might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.” Then, all of a sudden, the words come: “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel...”

All of the good things said about Reuben were negated by the revelation of his sin. We don’t know if Jacob ever confronted Reuben before the verses at the beginning of this chapter, but Jacob certainly never forgot Reuben’s sin. Now, Reuben was paying the price. At a time when blessings are given, Reuben receives a rebuke. How many will stand before the Lord one day expecting a blessing only to hear “depart from me?” (Matt. 7:23) How many shiny things will be burnt up because we refused to confess and forsake our sin? May the Lord help us remember the high cost of sin.

Day 12: Nadab and Abihu
Sin Makes Religious Service Abominable

“And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”

- Leviticus 10:2

The name Israel was given to Jacob one night when he wrestled with the Lord. Jacob had 12 sons and those 12 sons (with a few twists) made up the 12 tribes of Israel. Joseph, one of those sons, was hated by his brothers and sold into slavery. God was with Joseph though, and put him in a position to save his family when a famine struck the land. Consequently, the children of Israel were given places to live in Egypt.

After a period of time the Egyptians forgot about how Joseph was used to save them through seven years of famine. The children of Israel were enslaved for 400 years. God eventually raised up a man, Moses, to lead them out of Egypt and into the land that God had promised to give Abraham. It was during this time God began to clearly communicate with His people. God instructed Moses to build a Tabernacle for religious worship and there were very strict and tedious rules about exactly how, when, and in what way the people were allowed to meet with the Lord.

We have to remember in everything that God is the One that makes the rules. We may not always understand them, but we'd best not bend or break them. We have to trust that He knows best.

Moses's brother was named Aaron. Aaron was chosen to be a priest and his children were sanctified (separated or called out) to be priests, as well. The sons of Aaron were named Nadab and Abihu.

The Bible tells us in the verse before the one referenced that Nadab and Abihu offered “strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.” This offering that Nadab and Abihu made resulted in swift judgment from God.

People argue over exactly what they did or why they did it. At the end of the day the fact is that they tried to offer something to God in a way that God had not commanded. Don't forget that God's Holy presence is lethal to us when we approach Him in a sinful state. It's only when we have been cleansed the appropriate way (through the blood of Jesus) that we can approach God. No matter how trained or sincere they were, their actions were sin and it made their service repulsive to God.

Day 13: Aaron and Miriam
Sin Envy's Other's Fellowship With God

"And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed."
- Numbers 12:9

In this passage, Moses's brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, spoke against Moses. The immediate catalyst for this was their disapproval of Moses marrying an Ethiopian woman, but their comments revealed the jealousy of their hearts. They said "Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" (Num. 12:2) It's not indicated when or in front of who they said these things, but "the LORD heard it."

God called Moses, Aaron, and Miriam out to meet with Him at the tabernacle. God reprimanded Aaron and Miriam for their envy against their brother. Moses was a special man. The scripture says that he was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3) God defended His servant fiercely and when the cloud of His glory departed, Miriam was struck with leprosy.

It is in the heart of man to criticize others. Just give us enough time and we'll find something to complain about. Sadly, this is true in religious circles as well. There are some things we should be critical of. When someone rejects Bible truth and stirs up divisions, we should mark them and avoid them. (Romans 16:17) But, oftentimes, we criticize too harshly out of envy or jealousy.

When God blesses a church that isn't compromising Bible doctrine, we will look for a reason to discredit the work being done. When a preacher preaches a convicting message, we will find something with his disposition, dress, or demeanor to discredit what he has to say.

Moses was special because Moses was specifically called out by God, but also because of his meekness and willingness to simply fellowship with God. He stayed on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights without food or water just talking with God. Before we criticize another person for being used of God, it might be worth asking, do we pray like they pray? Do we desire the presence of God like they do? Do we search the scriptures like they do? Do we yield ourselves like they do? The heart of sin is always a critical heart. Let us pray that God will deliver us from these envious strivings so that we may focus more clearly on being led by God personally. God may not call you to be Moses. That's okay. Yield yourself to the Lord and be content.

Day 14: Balaam
Sin Finds A Way To Compromise Virtue

“And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God’s anger was kindled because he went...”

- Numbers 22:21-22

God gave victory to the children of Israel over their enemies as they travelled to the promised land. The king of one of the nearby nations, Moab, conspired to bring a curse over Israel. This king understood that Israel’s power was not in their armies but in their God. He sent messengers to a prophet named Balaam to try to hire him to curse Israel. God asks Balaam who had come to see him (sometimes God asks us questions He already knows the answer to). When Balaam told the Lord that they were messengers from Moab, God told him “Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.” (Num. 22:12)

After Balaam sends away these messengers, the king of Moab doubles down and sends a more illustrious party of ambassadors to bribe Balaam into doing what he was forbidden to do. At this point, Balaam sees the fanfare, he hears what they have to offer him, and THEN he goes and asks the Lord what he should do.

God had determined that Israel was blessed. He made it very clear what His intention was, but Balaam was convinced that maybe God had changed his mind. Balaam was a true prophet. He communed with the true God, but he was convinced by money, status, and fame to do the thing that God forbade.

If you follow the story, Balaam never gets to pronounce the curse. He stands on top of a mountain and actually proclaims three blessings over Israel, much to the disappointment of the king of Moab. At the end of chapter 24, it seems that Balaam parts ways with Moab and goes home. At the beginning of chapter 25, however, Israel commits sin before God through sexual immorality with the daughters of Moab. The book of Revelation tells us that Balaam taught the king of Moab to “cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel” and to “commit fornication.” (Rev. 2:14)

Balaam couldn’t curse Israel, but he knew that if Israel were to sin, God would have to judge them. He found a way to weaken God’s people and get his reward from Moab. He threw away his calling and fellowship with God for money. What was the consequence of this? Balaam was eventually killed by the children of Israel. (Num. 31:8)

Day 15: Achaan
Sin Makes Victory Impossible

“And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned...”

- Joshua 7:10-11

After the death of Moses, God used Joshua to lead Israel into the promised land. They sieged the city of Jericho and overthrew it. The battle was won and not a single Israelite was killed. Truly God was fighting for Israel.

The next city that had to be conquered was Ai. Joshua sent men to spy out the city and bring back a report. They returned and essentially said, “the battle will be easy. There’s no need to ready all of our army. Just send a few thousand and we’ll be fine.” Joshua sent about three thousand men into battle expecting a swift and glorious victory. Instead, thirty-six men died as the armies of Israel retreated in defeat.

Joshua is dumbfounded. He can’t believe it. He falls down before God and cries out, “wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?” (Josh. 7:7) God’s response was simply, “what are you doing on your face? Why are you praying like this? There’s sin in the camp. Get up and deal with it.”

God had set the boundaries of the promised land and told the people that they could have all the spoils of all the battles except for the first one. Everything in Jericho was the Lord’s. Nothing was to be taken for any reason. However, a certain Israelite named Achaan didn’t seem to think that God was serious about this command. He had taken some spoils of battle for himself. He hid what he took. No one knew except for the only One that really mattered: God.

Because of Achaan’s sin, thirty-six men lost their lives. Israel had been handed their first shameful loss. Achaan’s greed cost him his life and the lives of his family. The entire family was judged because of what he did.

Don’t think your sin doesn’t hurt anyone. Don’t be deceived into thinking that it’s only going to hurt you, either. Your hidden, darling sin will spell the downfall of your family, your church, and your friends. Sin will utterly defeat you.

Day 16: Samson
Sin Removes All Strength

“And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.”

- Judges 16:20

After the children of Israel went in to possess the land that was promised to them, it was only a matter of time before they lost that fellowship with God that they once had. Men began doing what was right in their own eyes instead of following God’s commands, and God allowed Israel to be conquered by enemy nations. When the people repented, God would raise someone up to deliver them. We call these individuals that God used mightily during these times “Judges.”

Perhaps the most notable Judge was Samson. Samson was one of those rare people whose birth was announced by an angel of the Lord. God wanted to use Samson in a special way and there were certain things God expected Samson to do in honor of that calling. He was raised as a Nazarite. This meant that he couldn’t come into contact with any kind of dead body, he couldn’t drink alcohol, and he couldn’t cut his hair. God, in turn, gave Samson supernatural strength and used him mightily to deliver the people of Israel.

Despite all these things, Samson had a problem. He compromised the majority of his vow. He took honey out of the carcass of a lion. He definitely didn’t keep himself away from alcohol. His greatest weakness, though, was a woman named Delilah. The Philistines hired Delilah to figure out what the source of Samson’s strength was so that they might be able to defeat him. Delilah used all her womanly ways to coerce Samson into confessing that, if his hair was cut, he would lose his power. Delilah lulled Samson to sleep and called in a man to cut his hair. When Samson rose from his sleep being told that the Philistines were upon him, he went out with full confidence that he still had the blessing of God. He didn’t know that, because he had compromised the very last of his commitments, God’s power was no longer upon him.

Sin will convince you that you have strength when all strength is gone. It will make you compromise principles one by one until there is nothing left for God to bless in your life. Sin makes us weak and brings us very low indeed.

Day 17: Jabesh-Gilead
Sin Makes A Spiritual Pacifist

“And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly.”
- Judges 21:8

The context behind this account is not for the faint of heart. This is among the grislier records we find in scripture.

There was a certain Levite (kind of like a helper to the priests) who had a concubine that was unfaithful to him. He followed her and restored her to himself. On his way home, he stopped in a city that was of the tribe of Benjamin (one of the tribes of Israel). A certain man took the Levite and his concubine into his home for the night. While they were there, the men of the city sieged the house and demanded the man to turn over the Levite to them so that they could force themselves upon them. The man refused to hand over the Levite, but the Levite's concubine was eventually surrendered. The next morning, the concubine was found dead at the door of the house. The Levite gathered up the body and went home. Once he got home, he cut her body into pieces and sent them to the different tribes of Israel. This, as you can imagine, caused quite the stir.

The tribes of Israel all gathered together to ask this Levite why he would do something like this. When he told them all the things that had transpired, the nation was moved against the tribe of Benjamin. They demanded that the men responsible for this be handed over, but Benjamin refused. The end result was that the tribe of Benjamin was all but wiped out because of the sin of these people.

When it was all over, the people of Israel took note of whether everybody came to the assembly or not. There was one city, Jabesh-Gilead, that completely ignored the call to assemble. The children of Israel then rose against Jabesh-Gilead and completely destroyed the city.

The sin of Jabesh-Gilead was simple: when it was time to fight, they stayed home. Conflict is never pleasant, but it is sometimes necessary. We are called to be a “good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (II Tim. 2:3) Good soldiers don't back down from a fight. They sure don't stay home when the fighting's going on. Sin will convince us that someone else will pick up the slack or that “it's not my problem.” Sin keeps us from being vigilant and valiant. Sin keeps us out of the battle. By staying out of the battle, we lose the war.

Day 18: Eli
Sin Makes God Turn His Back On A People

“And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was...”

- I Samuel 3:2-3

Towards the end of the time of the Judges, the priestly office had diminished greatly in integrity. Eli was the high priest, and his sons were wicked and selfish. God was raising up a man to speak for the Lord. Samuel was a walking miracle because his mother, Hannah, was barren. She couldn't have children until she went to the Lord with a broken heart. God promised her a son, and she, in turn, promised to give the child back to the Lord once she had weaned him. Though he wasn't a priest, Samuel was raised to be a servant of the Lord.

In the tabernacle there was supposed to be a lamp that always burned. The priest would have to make sure it had oil in it at all times so that the flame never went out, but Eli grew old and careless. He let the fire go out and, when that happened, God spoke to Samuel. At first, Samuel didn't understand what was going on, but when he found out that the Lord was speaking to him, he listened very seriously.

Samuel is recognized as the last of the Judges and the first prophet in Israel. God used Samuel to lead the people for many years until they demanded to have a king like the other nations. Though the Judges were influential in providing military victories in Israel, they were not the spiritual leaders of the people. The spiritual leaders were supposed to be the priests. The priests had access to the books of Moses (the first 5 books of the Bible). They were charged with overseeing the performance of sacrifices and other religious duties. But when Eli neglected his duties to the point where the lamp went out, God chose to speak through Samuel instead.

Eli's sin was so great before God that, for a season, God completely forsook the priestly order. He allowed the ark of the testimony (also called the ark of the covenant) to be taken by the enemies of God's people. The sons of Eli were killed, and Eli himself fell backwards dead because of the judgment of God. The glory of the Lord had departed Israel because of their sin. Just because we might have a good heritage or are doing good things doesn't mean that our hearts cannot become apathetic in our fellowship with God. Oh, Christian, don't let the light go out! Keep the fire burning!

Day 19: Saul
Sin Attempts To Justify Disobedience

“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

- I Samuel 15:22-23

Back when Moses was leading the people of Israel through the wilderness towards the promised land, there was a nation that ambushed them along the way. God promised Moses that, one day, He would judge those people for what they did. Those people were the Amalekites.

Samuel served God and Israel for many years and, when he started to get older, the people cried out for a king. A man named Saul was anointed King over Israel. Saul was tall and strong, but what he had by way of physical prowess he lacked in spiritual attributes.

One day God instructed Saul to go to war against the Amalekites. Saul was told to utterly desolate them. No human or animal was allowed to live because of how they had treated God's people and for their sins against God. Saul goes out into battle and, when Samuel comes to check on Saul afterwards, he finds that Saul didn't do as God commanded. Saul had defeated the Amalekites, but he spared the king, Agag, as well as much livestock. When confronted, Saul offered up excuses to justify his disobedience. He claimed that that he had obeyed God and that they would sacrifice the animals to the Lord. Samuel retorted that God didn't demand extra sacrifices, but He DID demand obedience.

Because of Saul's sin here, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and Samuel had to go anoint a new king over Israel. Saul thought he was doing God a service by taking livestock and prisoners, but all God wanted was obedience. Sometimes we will try to offer God anything and everything EXCEPT what He has demanded of us. If God calls us to witness to a specific person, we will try to claim that God will be just as pleased if we just pray for them instead. God wants you to give your time to serve Him, but we reason that we can just put a little extra money in the offering plate and we'll be okay. No, what God tells us to do is exactly what we need to do. We honor him best when we simply follow instruction no matter how well we think we can justify our disobedience.

Day 20: David
Sin Thoroughly Breaks The Soul

“David therefore besought God for the child, and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.”

- II Samuel 12:16

God rejected Saul because of his disobedience and turned His favor towards David. David was a mighty man who loved the Lord intensely. For all his attributes, however, David was still a man who had his own sins and failures.

After he had inherited the kingdom that God had promised him, David had a moment of complacency. Springtime was often used for nations to go to war against each other. One year, instead of leading his nation in battle, David sent someone else and stayed home in his palace. While he was there, he walked out on his balcony and saw a woman bathing on her rooftop. He sent after the woman, and he committed sexual sin with her.

This woman’s husband was one of David’s best soldiers. The woman wound up getting pregnant and, when David couldn’t cover up the fact that the child was his, he had her husband placed on the frontlines in battle so that he would be killed.

David goes on with his life thinking that he had gotten away with his sin until God sent Nathan, the prophet, to rebuke him. David is told that his household was going to be troubled, and that the child conceived in sin would die. This rebuke pierced David’s heart and he was thoroughly broken before the Lord.

Remember, again, that sins we commit in secret will always have consequences that affect those closest to us. The rest of David’s life was going to be troubled because of his sin. The child was going to die. Many of David’s best soldiers were already dead because of his attempted cover-up, but David found out that there really is no cover-up when it comes to sin.

It is because of this sin, however, that we get some of the most wonderful Psalms in scripture. David says in the Psalm written during this time, “Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me... Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” (Ps. 51:8, 10, 12)

Sin will thoroughly break your soul, but God can bind up the brokenhearted.

Day 21: Joab
Sin Will Not Go Unpunished Forever

“Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.”

- I Kings 2:6

David's general was his nephew Joab. They had a complicated relationship but, likely because he was David's sister's son, David always gave leniency to Joab.

The nation of Israel was divided for a short period of time after the death of Saul. At first, only a portion of Israel followed after David and the rest followed Saul's only remaining son. There was a period of conflict and, during this time, one of Joab's family members was killed in self-defense. Asahel is called Joab's brother in scripture, but the Hebrew word for brother also extends to cousins.

Asahel fought on David's side of this conflict and Abner was the general of the opposing side. Abner's forces were defeated, and Abner retreated with Asahel running hard after him. Abner pleaded with Asahel to turn back from chasing him, but Asahel wouldn't listen. Abner thrust his spear behind him killing Asahel as it struck him. After this, Abner changed his loyalties and went to David to serve him.

In the law, there are provisions for people who shed blood accidentally or in self-defense. There were several “cities of refuge” in Israel where a person could be safe from those wanting to do them harm. Abner was called to one of these cities, but Joab tricked Abner. As Joab and Abner were talking together inside the city, Joab led Abner outside of the gates of the city. As soon as Abner was no longer protected by the law of God, Joab killed Abner. Later on, Joab kills his own cousin, Amasa, employing the same smooth-talking tactics to lower the guard of his victim.

David is lenient with Joab all throughout his life, but when he was instructing his son, Solomon, he told him to punish Joab for his sins and “not his hoar (white) head go down to the grave in peace.” After Solomon is installed as the king of Israel, he has Joab killed.

Sin will convince you that if nothing bad immediately happens then that means you got away with it. This couldn't be farther from the truth. God keeps a record and will exact judgment one day. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal. 6:7) Sin always has consequences and, sooner or later, they will find you.

Day 22: Solomon
Sin Ruins A Good Name

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.”

- I Kings 11:4

Solomon was a good king until his old age. He was supernaturally gifted with wisdom, honor, riches, and glory. He inherited a great kingdom and sustained it just by the virtue of who he was and God’s blessings. His name literally means “peace.” He was the one that God allowed to build a Temple in Jerusalem so that the people had a place to worship God in the established kingdom. His name was honored by his own subjects and foreign leaders alike.

Despite all these virtues, Solomon was still a man who had sin. He loved women and, specifically, foreign women. He took for himself as many women as he could and, in due time, they pulled his heart away from following God like he should have. Because of this sin, people often discount everything else that Solomon did.

Solomon wrote three books that are in the Bible: Proverbs (a little of that was not written by Solomon), Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Proverbs contains a lot of warning against doing exactly what Solomon did so people are often less critical of it. When Solomon tells of the dangers of following after the whorish woman, we immediately use the author as the example to illustrate the point.

Ecclesiastes was written towards the end of Solomon’s life. For the most part, Ecclesiastes is a very solemn book with very few encouraging words. It’s often presented as “this is the outlook of a compromiser: someone who fell into sin.” As true as that may be, that Solomon did compromise and fall into sin, we mustn’t overlook the resolve at the end of the book: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecc. 12:13-14)

The Song of Solomon is most neglected for many reasons, but the main reason being that people cannot accept that such a work could be written by a man who compromised regarding women. Because of Solomon’s sin, his reputation and good name has been tarnished in the eyes of all who consider him. Sin will do the same to you.

Day 23: Ahab
Sin Destroys A Family

“Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity...”
- I Kings 21:21

After the death of Solomon, the nation of Israel split. The ten northern tribes were still referred to as Israel (sometimes Samaria) and the two southern tribes were called Judah. The line of David continued to reign in Judah, but the nation of Israel was a mess. Israel had more bad kings than good kings and the worst of those was named Ahab.

One day, Ahab approaches a man named Naboth and offers to buy his land. Now, land was very precious to the children of Israel. Land was more than just where they lived, but it was a literal sign of the faithfulness of God. Their ancestors had to obtain that land through faith and many hard-fought battles. It wasn't something to disregard or sell, so Naboth refused Ahab's offer. Ahab, literally, went home and cried about being rejected. Jezebel, his wife, saw this and had Naboth killed so that Ahab could just take the land.

After the death of Naboth, Ahab goes to survey “his” new piece of property, but Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, meets him there. Elijah tells Ahab that, because of his sin, Ahab's blood was going to be poured out in the same place that Naboth died. Furthermore, God was so angry with Ahab that He promised to have Ahab's entire lineage extinguished. Ahab was struck by these words and humbled himself before the Lord. God still promised to judge Ahab's family, but, because Ahab humbled his heart before the Lord, God delayed the judgment on Ahab's family until after Ahab was dead.

In the next chapter of scripture, Judah and Israel join forces against the nation of Syria to take back a city that belonged to Israel. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, asked for a prophet who could tell them whether God would deliver them in battle. They bring out a prophet named Micaiah who told Ahab that he was going to die in battle. The scripture tells us that there was a certain archer who drew his bow “at a venture” (at random) and the arrow struck Ahab in the weakest part of his armor. By the time Ahab got back home, he was dead. They cleaned out the chariot, dumping Ahab's blood, at the same place where Naboth was killed. After Ahab's death, God raised up a man who would slay Ahab's wife and all his sons. Sin will destroy your family.

Day 24: Gehazi
Sin Is Not Content With Godliness

*“The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.
And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.”*
- II Kings 5:27

Elijah was the prophet of the Lord who pronounced judgment on Ahab. Elijah's successor was named Elisha. During the days of Elisha, the Syrian army came through Israel and took prisoners out of the land. The captain of the army of Syria, Naaman, was a mighty man who was respected by everyone that knew him.

Naaman, for all his honor and victory in battle, had a major problem: he contracted leprosy. Leprosy is a disease that literally rots the body. It is highly contagious and had no cure, so it was a pretty big deal. One of the women that was taken captive out of Israel told her mistress that if Naaman were in Samaria, the prophet of God would heal him.

Word gets out that there might be hope for Naaman. The king of Syria sends Naaman to the king of Israel with gifts. The king of Israel despairs, thinking it to be a trap to give Syria an excuse to start a war with Israel. Elisha hears about the commotion and sends word to the king saying “send Naaman to me.”

Naaman pulls up to Elisha's house in his fancy chariot, his servants all with him, and loaded down with gifts of clothes and money. Elisha sends a servant out to Naaman and tells him to dip himself in the Jordan river seven times. At first, Naaman is very upset. He expected Elisha to come out, wave his hands in the air, and heal him with great dramatic effect. He felt mocked and belittled by the prospect of having to dip in the Jordan river when there were far cleaner and better rivers in his homeland. Naaman's servants convince him to simply do as he was commanded and, to his amazement, when he came out the water the seventh time, he was cleansed.

Naaman returns to Elisha and offers him all the gifts that he had, but Elisha refused payment and sent Naaman away. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, thought it wasn't fair to not receive anything from the hands of the captain of an opposing army, so he chases after Naaman and gets a gift from him. Gehazi did this secretly and lied about it to Elisha. Because of his sin, Naaman's leprosy was turned upon Gehazi. By being discontent, Gehazi condemned himself. “But godliness with contentment is great gain.” (I Tim. 6:6) Because sin is not content, sin will be condemned.

Day 25: Uzziah
Sin Casts Us From The House Of God

“Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar... and they thrust him out from hence.”

- II Chronicles 26:19-20

Uzziah, also known as Azariah in the book of II Kings, was a good king that had a bad ending. II Kings tells us that he “did that which was right in the sight of the LORD,” but then goes on to say that “the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death.” (II Kin. 15:3, 5) Why would God strike a good king with leprosy? The answer to that is found in II Chronicles.

God had given Uzziah great victory in battle over his enemies. Once he had conquered his foes, however, his “heart was lifted up to his destruction.” (II Chr. 26:16) He became full of himself, in other words. He got to the place where he no longer thought he needed God’s help. Instead, he went into the temple to burn incense.

There were three main sections to the temple. The court that immediately surrounded the temple was accessible to the men of Israel, the Levites, and the priests. Only the Levites and priests could actually go into the Temple itself, and only the High Priest could go into the innermost part of the Temple once a year. Uzziah was neither a Levite (a descendant of Levi, the son of Jacob) nor a priest (a descendent of Aaron, the first priest) and, so, he was not allowed to go into the Temple itself. He REALLY wasn’t allowed to actually make sacrifices himself, but remember, he was full of pride. He thought that he had something to offer God and had forgotten that God does not need or depend on man for anything.

The priests come in and rebuke the king for doing something that he was not permitted to do. Uzziah gets angry with the priests for rebuking him and, as his anger grew, his forehead became covered with the signs of leprosy. Uzziah had served the Lord for a long time but he forgot to be dependent upon the Lord. When his sin was rebuked, instead of humbling himself, he got angry. The leprosy made him an outcast. He lost his kingdom, his reputation, his throne, but, most of all, he lost the privilege of worshipping God at the temple. When our sin gets exposed and we refuse to humble ourselves, it strips us of all honor and drives us away from the house of God.

Day 26: Jonah
Sin Makes Silent Witnesses

“But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD...”
- Jonah 1:3

Before God judged the nation of Israel for their evil kings and their sin, God was still faithful to send them prophets to declare His word. Jonah was one of these prophets.

In the verse before the one referenced, God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the people there. Instead of obeying God, Jonah runs away in the opposite direction from where he was sent. If we take the time to understand exactly where Nineveh was, then we will understand why Jonah didn't want to go there.

Nineveh was not in Israel. In fact, Nineveh was the capitol city of the Assyrians. The Assyrian people were enemies of God and Israel. Jonah didn't want to give them the message of the Lord. Jonah WANTED to see Nineveh condemned!

Running from the Lord, Jonah got on a ship to head anywhere except Nineveh. While they were out on the sea, however, a terrible storm rose up and the men on the ship were very afraid. They gathered everyone together and cast lots to find out who God was so angry with. Jonah had to confess that he was a prophet on the run. Jonah was thrown into the sea and the storm immediately ceased. God prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah and, after spending three days and nights in the belly of this fish, Jonah finally surrendered himself to God. The fish vomited Jonah out on the shore, and he ran to Nineveh to declare the word of judgment from God.

After Jonah proclaims that the wrath of God was going to fall on Nineveh, the entire city repented of their sin before God. Jonah, leaving the city, sat down on a hill to overlook the city. He was waiting for God's judgment to come, but it never came. Jonah was angry. He wanted Nineveh to burn because they were God's enemies, but God reminded Jonah that he was determined to have mercy on this wicked city because of their children and cattle. (Jonah 4:11)

God's desire is to save sinners, but He wants to send us to witness to them. If we let sin have its way in our hearts it will do the same thing it did to Jonah: it will make us silent witnesses so that the lost never even hear that God wants to deliver them. Oh, for the sake of those still living under the judgment of God, may we forsake our sin and go tell them that Christ can save them!

Day 27: Hezekiah
Sin Makes Us Complacent Towards Future Judgments

“Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?”

- II Kings 20:19

Unfortunately, the Assyrian people went back to their sinful ways and remained the enemies of God and His people. The armies of the Assyrian kingdom sieged the city of Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah. The enemy was better equipped, had more men, more confidence, better military strategy and position, and a very fierce commander. All hope seemed lost excepting one point: Hezekiah was a praying king. Hezekiah went before the Lord and petitioned for help, which the Lord miraculously provided.

After God spared Jerusalem, Hezekiah fell sick. Isaiah, the prophet of the Lord, came to the king and told him that he would not recover from his illness. After Isaiah left, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and pleaded again with God for mercy. God told Isaiah to turn around and bring a new word to Hezekiah saying that his life had been extended for 15 more years.

These extra 15 years proved to be problematic, though. Prior to that time, Hezekiah was a really good king. However, during these last 15 years, Hezekiah let his guard down and made some poor decisions.

One day, messengers came from the distant land of Babylon bringing gifts for Hezekiah. He takes these messengers and shows them all the treasures and precious things that Judah had. After these men leave, God sends Isaiah to Hezekiah to pronounce a word of judgment on him. God tells Hezekiah that there was coming a day when the nation of Babylon would return to Jerusalem to rob and plunder all the treasures that Hezekiah had just shown them. The Lord continues to tell Hezekiah that the future generations would be enslaved by this nation and taken away from their homeland.

Hezekiah's response was literally, “that's okay. It doesn't matter so long as it happens after I die.” Hezekiah was not concerned about the fact that his sin was going to cost the generations after him dearly. Sin only concerns itself with itself. It never considers what another person must endure. It makes us forget that our actions have consequences that will affect other people for generations to come. Sin makes us complacent concerning the judgment that is still yet to come. So long as it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me.

Day 28: Jehoiakim
Sin Removes Us From God's Book

"And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth."

- Jeremiah 36:23

In the New Testament, there are two different records of the genealogy of Christ. One of these (most likely Luke's) tells the genealogy of Christ through Mary despite it using Joseph's name. Matthew's account is interesting by itself because, if you study the lineage of kings in Judah, you will find that there are some names that are skipped entirely. One of these names that is missing from Matthew's account is Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim was one of the last kings of Judah before God sent the Babylonian empire to judge His people. God sends the prophet Jeremiah to deliver a warning to Jehoiakim. The way the message is delivered, however, is unique. God tells Jeremiah to write the message down and then have it delivered to the king. Jeremiah does as God instructed him.

The message itself is not specifically recorded for us, though we get an overview of what the message was. "Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah even unto this day." (Jeremiah 36:2) God's desire in giving this message is also recorded for us. "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." God promised to spare Judah if they repented of their sin.

Jehoiakim, upon hearing the message of the Lord, did not humble himself at all. In fact, he grabbed the pages, cut them up with a knife, and tossed them into the fire that was burning. Jehoiakim had absolutely no respect or regard for the word of the Lord and, consequently, when it came time to present a record of the generations preceding Christ, Jehoiakim was completely omitted.

There is another book mentioned in scripture with names written in it: the book of life. Unless we humble ourselves at the rebuke of God and turn to Christ, our fate will be the same as Jehoiakim and we will have our names removed from God's book.

Day 29: Nebuchadnezzar
Sin Diminishes Our Understanding

“The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”

- Daniel 4:33

God used Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to judge Judah for their sins. He took captives and utterly destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Among the captives that he took was a young man named Daniel. Daniel was resolved that, even though he was being taken away to a foreign land, he was going to serve God with everything he had. He “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.” (Dan. 1:8) God honored Daniel’s faithfulness and gave him great influence and respect in the eyes of all who observed him.

Due to his encounters with Daniel and other Hebrew men, Nebuchadnezzar knew that the God of Israel was the one, true God. After Daniel both revealed and interpreted a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, he said “Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings...” (Dan. 2:47) Later, God miraculously spared the lives of three Hebrew men when they refused to bow down to an idol that was made, and they were cast into a furnace. After this, “Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him...” (Dan. 3:28) Nebuchadnezzar knew who the true God was.

There came a day, though, when Nebuchadnezzar surveyed his kingdom and boasted to himself of all the things he had accomplished. God immediately rebuked him of his pride and declared that his understanding was going to be taken away and he was going to become as a beast of the field. Sin took everything that Nebuchadnezzar boasted in away from him and completely removed his ability to reason.

Thankfully, Nebuchadnezzar eventually lifted his eyes to heaven, his understanding returned, and he began to praise God. Let us be thankful that, even though sin has dire consequences, there is hope to repent and have our understanding returned to us so that we may praise the Most High God the way He deserves to be praised!

Day 30: Haman
Sin Brings Death Upon Itself

“So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai...”
-Esther 7:10

After being in captivity for 70 years, God’s people were allowed to return home. Not all Jews (a term derived from the name ‘Judah’) decided to go. God’s people were scattered and, for the most part, discouraged.

There was a certain Israelite living in the palace city of the Persian empire during the reign of Xerxes, called Ahasuerus in scripture. This man, Mordecai, had a niece named Esther. The king, after suffering great military defeat, sought comfort in a new queen. The Lord gave Esther favor and she was made queen.

Mordecai was a man of principle and a man, apparently, who understood the history of his people. The king had promoted a certain man, Haman, to a position of great honor. The scripture tells us Mordecai’s specific lineage: “Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.” (Esth. 2:5) Haman was called an “Agagite.” This is very important because, if you study the Bible, you will find that Agag was the name of the Amalekite king that the first king of Israel, Saul, spared. The prophet Samuel killed Agag, but some of Agag’s children obviously escaped. Haman was a descendant of this very king that Saul failed to judge. Mordecai was of the same line of Israelites that Saul was.

When Mordecai saw Haman, he saw the product of his ancestors’ failures. Consequently, Mordecai refused to give any honor to Haman which caused Haman to despise, not only Mordecai, but all Jews. He devised a plan to have all Jews killed not knowing that the woman recently made queen had kept her Jewish heritage a secret.

God brought Haman’s wrath upon his own head. Haman purposed to hang Mordecai on gallows that he had made just for the occasion. When God brought about the deliverance of His people, the king was very angry with Haman and had him hanged on those very gallows intended for Mordecai.

By nature, sin rules our lives. It crushes our hope and will see us hanged upon our own gallows. The only hope we have is to trust in the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin for “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23)