

# Ordinary People Rising

[Book Three]

“Ruth Gleaning in the field of Boaz”



Artwork of *T. Sean Sullivan*, April of 2021

God created every person out of the same dirt (so to speak) and therefore we are all equally able to be used by Him in His service. We will see after laying groundwork that God takes some of the most unlikely individuals and with them is able to do marvelous things. He has work for each of us, maybe you have discovered your role in His service or maybe your day is still ahead. Let's study together.

Brian V. Sullivan, Jordan, Ontario, Canada [bvsprchr@bellnet.ca](mailto:bvsprchr@bellnet.ca) -2021-

# *Ordinary People Rising*

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**Dedication of this Study:** *This study is dedicated to the ordinary people that God made into extra-ordinary servants in His Kingdom. God knew their full potential (as their Maker) and also knew what they were capable of much more than they thought they were. Many of the Bible characters were ordinary people who loved God and did His will in their lives--- who rose even above their own expectations. Brian*

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## Shiphrah and Puah— true midwives

1

### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: ACCORDING TO SOURCES THESE LADIES ARE: SHI-FAR'-AH AND POO'-AH, AND THEY WERE MIDWIVES FOR THE ISRAELITE WOMEN WHO CHOSE TO HONOR GOD RATHER THAN PHARAOH.**

A. To appreciate the story of these two ordinary women who working for God we must go back a little in Bible

history.

B. The Egyptian dynasty had a disruption in its flow when a people call Hyksos (shepherd kings) ruled over Egypt during the days when Joseph came into Egypt and was able to find favor in the sight of these kings. (See Bob and Sandra Waldron's 'History and Geography of the Bible' for further details, bvs)

C. The Egyptians removed every indication of that control by a foreign power. However the presence of Israel in their land was a constant reminder. (Exodus 1:7-8) and it stirred up fear in him (see Exodus 1:9-10).

1. He feared that they might be conquered by another enemy and that Israel might join forces with them and defeat Egypt (see Exodus 1:10-12). Notice what God did for Israel.
2. Again, he increased the burdens of their work. The Israelites had to work with rigor (Webster's: extreme hardship or difficulty) and he made their lives "bitter with hard bondage" (1:13-14).

D. So far none of his schemes seemed to diminish their multiplication by childbirth, so he took it a step further (read Exodus 1:15-16)

### **I. At this stage we meet the subjects for this study: SHI-FAR'-AH AND POO'-AH**

- A. The king of Israel (or someone from his court) was familiar with these women.
1. They were "Hebrews" (physical descendants of Abraham). The term "Hebrew" or "Hebrews" was first given them in Genesis 14:13 of "Abram" at the time that the kings had taken Lot and others captive.
  2. Hebrew: OT:5680 "A proper noun designating Hebrew. The gentilic or ethnic form of the word meaning a Hebrew person, possibly a person from beyond the Euphrates River. Abraham is called a Hebrew in Gen 14:13, where the word was first used. This is usually traced back to Eber who was

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a Shemite. Abraham's lineage is traced back to Shem through Eber, Shem being the ancestor of all the sons of Eber (Gen 10:21; 11:10; 32).

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- C. These women were “midwives” (those who attend to the birthing of babies and the care of mothers at that time; AArda is a “midwife” in Holland)
- D. Pharaoh wanted them to ‘kill the male offspring’ and ‘preserve the females’ at birth (Exodus 1:16)
- E. Exodus 1:17 shows the faith of these women and their concern about God (Acts 5:29). When questioned they suggested that the healthy Hebrew women delivered babies before they arrived.
- F. Exodus 1:20 shows how God blessed them in their work.
- G. Exodus 1:21 shows how God rewarded them with ‘households’
- H. Pharaoh appealed to his people to destroy the Hebrew children (1:22)
- I. It was in this time that Moses was born and spared (Exodus 2:1-6)
- J. Rulers may conceive plans to control population by their ideas but God has not authorized it nor will He fail to hold them accountable. It was contrary to God then, and it is now!

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	The Hyksos were foreign kings in Joseph’s day		
2.	The slaughter of innocent children is acceptable		
3.	These women refused to comply because they feared God (they believed in Him and His will)		
4.	This new king (Pharaoh) was fighting against God		
5.	These two midwives are a great example to all		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	How did God show Pharaoh he was wrong about Israel?
2.	What exactly did Pharaoh want the midwives to do?
3.	Explain why the midwives would not comply?
4.	Moses was born at this time and survived. Explain that.
5.	What did the midwives and Jochebed (Moses’ mother) have in common?

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

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## The Young Woman — Help for Naaman

### 2

#### Introduction:

TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: A YOUNG GIRL FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL WAITING ON NAAMAN'S WIFE TOLD HER MISTRESS OF A PROPHET IN ISRAEL THAT COULD HELP HIS LEPROSY.

- A. Let's turn in our Bible to a very short account from which our study will come from (2 Kings 5:1-8)
- B. Let's begin by refreshing our memory about Naaman.
1. Naaman is "commander of the army of the king of Syria" (5:1)
  2. He was "a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master"
    - a. "Because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria" (5:1)
  3. "He also was a mighty man of valor, **but a leper.**" (5:1)
- C. The writer of 2 Kings gives us insight into how this young maiden of our study came into play at 5:2: "And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife."
1. We are not told her exact age but she is referred to as "a young girl".
  2. Her responsibility was to "wait on Naaman's wife" (be her attendant?)
  3. Though she had been taken by "a raid" yet she seems to be compliant to her new role, and apparently has a fondness for her mistress and her husband (Naaman)
    - a. This is suggested because she lets her mistress know about the possibility of healing through the prophet in Israel (2 Kings 5:3)
  4. She (however young or old she was) was not only aware that there was a prophet in Israel, but also had confidence in his ability to heal (2 Kings 5:3)
  5. We might observe that Naaman's wife is more responsive to suggestions from others than Naaman himself will be (in a few more verses)
- I. When Politics Get Involved**
1. However the word got through to Naaman (we are assuming his wife told him) he carried the message to his master (the king of Syria; v. 4). "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel".

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2. In light of what is said in 2 Kings 5:1 “was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master” we can understand fully what unfolds next. “Then the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” (2 Kings 5:5a; NKJV).
3. We learn that in readiness Naaman “took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothes.” (2 Kings 5:b).
  - a. We might add that he also carried the letter to the king of Israel (5:6).
4. The letter was simple in nature: “Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy” (2 Kings 5:6, NKJV).
5. 2 Kings 5:7 shows what the King of Israel thought when he read the letter.
  - a. Why is he not aware of the prophet in his nation, especially at a time when God installed Kings with anointing often at the hand of His prophets? *“Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me.”* (2 Kings 5:7b)
6. Elisha learns of this and has the king redirect Naaman to him (2 Kings 5:8) (More to follow in our next lesson in this series, bvs)

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	The young Israelite woman was the ruler of the house.		
2.	The young woman disliked her mistress.		
3.	The young woman had faith in the prophet.		
4.	Naaman’s wife told him what the girl said.		
5.	Israel’s king believed Syria was seeking a quarrel with him.		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	In your own words what does it mean to be a leper?
2.	Summarize everything you know about the young girl.
3.	What did the king of Syria think about the information?
4.	Show how the king of Israel jumped to wrong conclusions.
5.	What did Elisha hope to accomplish by healing him?

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

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## Naaman's wise servants— if the prophet?

### 3

#### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: 'WE MEET ANOTHER WISE UN-NAMED ORDINARY MAN OF SCRIPTURE WHO HAS REASONING POWERS CALMLY EXPRESSED THAT OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND ANGER IN HIS MASTER.'**

A. As we closed the previous lesson in this series we mentioned that we would be continuing in the account of Naaman.

B. In our previous study (Lesson 2) we saw a young girl from Israel who suggested that help could be found for Naaman's leprosy in Israel.

C. We saw where protocol between rulers interfered with a correct understanding of exactly what Naaman was seeking. The letter from the King of Syria to the King of Israel was interpreted as some type of snare or trap. [We know from our further study that it was nothing other than a King (in this case of Syria) seeking some help for his faithful and trusted servant (Naaman, the commander of his army).]

D. Before we left off that study we noticed that Elisha (the prophet) heard of the situation and suggested that Naaman be sent to him (2 Kings 5:8).

#### **I. Not Quite what Naaman had expected**

A. 2 Kings 5:9: Naaman arrives in military style before the house of Elisha.

B. 2 Kings 5:10: Elisha "sent a messenger to him" with instructions

C. Naaman did not appear to be either amused or convinced that this was a way to cleanse his leprosy (2 Kings 5:11)

1. He apparently had preconceived ideas about how this was to unfold.
  - a. "Indeed, I said to myself" (v. 11)
  - b. "He will surely come out to me" (Naaman deserved more respect that simply sending out a messenger to him, so he thought.)
  - c. "And call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy" (v. 11). [Naaman wanted a quick fix with little effort on his own part.]
2. Read 2 Kings 5:12: His next round of arguments dismisses what the prophet said on the basis that there are lots of clear and cleaner rivers in Damascus than those in Israel [the Jordan was

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affected by flow off the land and the soil that would erode into its waters, making it more like a muddy stream at times.]

- a. Naaman asks: “Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?”
- b. Naaman was guilty here of wanting to substitute when God gave a specific commandment.
- c. Observe again how v. 12 finishes: “So he turned and went away in a rage” [We might add: *he went away still a leper!*]

## II. The Wise Servants of Naaman (simple suggestions/big impact)

A. 2 Kings 5:13: “And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, “My father, if the prophet had bid you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you ‘Wash, and be clean?’”

1. Look at the wisdom of these servants.
2. A simple response given in love and compassion; clear reasoning.
3. Why do people want “great” instead of “simple” “clear and plain”?

B. 2 Kings 5:14 shows the results of doing it God’s way!

C. What Elisha hoped for came to pass (see 2 Kings 5:15-19).

### Some Simple Questions for Consideration:

#### True or False

#	Statement	True	False
1.	The wise servants are not named in this place		
2.	Naaman was called “Father” by them		
3.	They told Naaman he was his worst enemy		
4.	They calmly reasoned about his response		
5.	When Naaman heard he scoffed at them		

#### Thought Questions

1.	Tell the story of Naaman in your own words
2.	Tell how Elisha fits into the narrative
3.	Describe Naaman’s reaction to Elisha’s instructions
4.	Explain why we call them “wise servants”
5.	At what point was Naaman cleansed? Explain your answer

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

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## SILAS—A faithful worker with Paul

4

### Introduction:

TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: SILAS IS FIRST MENTIONED IN ACTS 15. SILAS AND BARSABAS ARE SENT TO ACCOMPANY PAUL AND BARNABAS WITH THE TRUTH REGARDING CIRCUMCISION OF THE GENTILES.

A. The meeting at Jerusalem is necessary:

1. According to Acts 15:1: “certain men came down from Judea” and were teaching the necessity for the Gentile converts to Christ to be circumcised into order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas were sent to see if that was an authorized teaching or not (read Acts 15:1-5).

a. Verse 5 identifies where the problem has arisen

2. The second reason for this meeting at Jerusalem was not to have the first “council” or “conference”. This is a prime example of what we might call the “partial revelation” period in the church. Since the New Testament was not completely written at this time, it was necessary to call together those teaching by inspiration and seek to resolve the issue. (The mention of **part** and **perfect** is included in the language of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, bvs). **The Part** would refer to that period in which God was speaking immediately and directly through the apostles and prophets (cf. Matthew 10:16-20; Ephesians 2:20; and Hebrews 2:3-4).

a. Observe that Peter (an apostle; Matthew 10:2); Barnabas (a prophet: Acts 13:1) along with Paul (an apostle: Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:1) and James (an apostle: Matthew 10:3; James 1:1: the Lord’s half-brother is the one most believe is here mentioned: Matthew 13:55-56) spoke.

b. Peter preached the gospel to the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house. It was God who convinced Him to go (see Acts 10:9-20). [Approved example]

c. Barnabas (a prophet) and Paul (an apostle) testified that God allowed them to work miracles and wonders among the Gentiles. [Necessary inference]

d. James read directly from the Old Testament to show this had been God’s intention. (Direct statement).

e. One important verse to notice: Acts 15:28 (read it)

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f. No circumcision was required but giving up of old ideas and practices was (see Acts 15:28-29).

## **I. Facts about Silas:**

A. Barsabas and Silas are referred to as “leading men among the brethren” (Acts 15:22)

B. Judas (apparently another name for Barsabas; Acts 15:27; 15:32).

C. Both Judas and Silas are “prophets” who “exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words” (Acts 15:32)

D. Silas remained at Antioch when Judas went back to Jerusalem (Acts 15:34). When Paul and Barnabas went different directions, Paul chose Silas to go with him (Acts 15:40); Barnabas took Mark.

E. Silas was with Paul when they were “dragged” into “the marketplace to the authorities (Acts 16:19). Their imprisonment and conduct led to the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:25-34).

F. Paul and Silas preached at Thessalonica (Acts 17:4), to avoid the mob finding them they sent them away by night to Berea (17:10). When the Jews came from Thessalonica Paul was sent away by sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there (v. 15). Paul sent back word for Silas and Timothy to join him at Athens (17:15; see Acts 18:5: they meet him at Corinth).

G. 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:12

## **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Silas was a mariner.		
2.	Silvanus is the same as Silas		
3.	Silas and Paul made an effective team		
4.	Paul and Silas were singing in stocks in prison		
5.	Peter called Silvanus “a faithful brother”		

### **Thought Questions**

1.	What details do we have about Silas himself?
2.	What resulted from the rift between Paul and Barnabas?
3.	Identify any others that Silas worked with beside Paul
4.	What experiences did Silas and Paul have together?
5.	Explain the part and the perfect (Acts 15 and 1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

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## **Ebed-Melech— a helpful Ethiopian Eunuch**



### **(in Jeremiah's day)**

Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: OUR STUDY TODAY DRAWS ATTENTION TO ANOTHER ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH THAT MANY MAY NOT HAVE NOTICED WHO INTERVENED AND MAY HAVE SPARED THE LIFE OF JEREMIAH."**

- A. Our study tonight involves the other Ethiopian Eunuch mentioned specifically in the Bible. This one actually has a name "Ebed-Melech".
- B. Let us talk for a moment about the state of Judah during the days of Jeremiah the prophet.
1. Jeremiah 1:3-4 reveals the time frame of the work of Jeremiah:
    - a. In the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah, the son of Amon, King of Judah
    - b. In the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah
      - i. (footnote in the New King James at Jeremiah 22 states: "also known as Coniah, Jeconiah and Jehoiachin")
      - ii. Kings of Israel and Judah (a chart or listing) suggests that the kings of Judah were successively: "Josiah (31 years and good); Jehoahaz (3 months, Bad); Jehoiakim (11 years, Bad); Jehoichin (3 months, Bad) and Zedekiah (11 years, Bad)
    - c. Until the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> years of Zedekiah, son of Josiah
    - d. Until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month
    - e. According to that same chart mentioned previously, occurred in 586 B.C. and the Babylonian Captivity followed for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11).
- C. Jeremiah's prophetic work spans a wide period of the last days of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). It would be far beyond the scope of this study to cover all of the circumstances in Jeremiah's efforts, so we will pick up just a short time before our current person comes into the scene in Jeremiah (the Book).
1. In Jeremiah 37 we learn that Jeremiah is heading out of the city to go to his property (37:12) and is arrested under a charge of defecting to Babylon (37:13-15).

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2. Zedekiah sent and rescued him from the prison (37:16-20) and sought to know from him what God's will was.
3. Zedekiah gave Jeremiah a place in "the court of the prison and a daily allotment of bread until it was no more (37:21)
4. Jeremiah's enemies called for his death (38:4); Zedekiah in weakness turned Jeremiah over to the enemies (38:5) and they cast him into a dungeon (like cistern, with no water but mire in the bottom of it; 38:6). Jeremiah sank in the mire.

## **I. Enter the other Ethiopian Eunuch (Jeremiah 38<sup>th</sup> chapter)**

- A. This eunuch has a name "Ebed-Melech", he is serving in the king's house (Jeremiah 38:7a)
- B. He reports to the king about what happened to Jeremiah (38:7b-9)
- C. The king instructs him to take help to rescue Jeremiah before he perishes (Jeremiah 38:10-13). Jeremiah "remained in the court of the prison" (v. 13)
- D. There is one other reference to this man in the Book of Jeremiah and we must consider it as well. Consider the words of Jeremiah 39:15-18. Jeremiah is able to declare God's will regarding Ebed-Melech.

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Without Jeremiah we would not know of this man.		
2.	Jeremiah prophesied the truth of God		
3.	Jeremiah's enemies were those who would not hear the words of God through him.		
4.	Ebed-Melech was an Ethiopian Eunuch		
5.	Ebed-Melech was concerned about Jeremiah.		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	What does this man being a Eunuch have to do with this story?
2.	What was the last word Jeremiah had for Ebed-Melech?
3.	How did God use an ordinary man to accomplish the rescue?
4.	What can we learn about Ebed-Melech from this rescue effort?
5.	What do we learn from Jeremiah 39:15-18?

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

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## An Ethiopian eunuch— learns of Jesus

### 6

#### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: THIS LESSON WILL CONSIDER THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH THAT MOST OF US KNOW OF WHO CAME TO JERUSALEM AS A JEW AND WENT HOME AS A DISCIPLE.**

A. Let's start with just a simple lesson in Geography.

1. The man we are considering was from Ethiopia (Acts 8:27). He had been "to Jerusalem to worship" (Acts 8:27).
2. "Ethiopia is the Greek name corresponding to the Cush of the Old Testament, but less extensive, being restricted to the country watered by the Nile south of Egypt, corresponding to the Nubia of modern geography, with the adjacent parts of Abyssinia." (from Acts of the Apostles Explained, by Joseph Addison Alexander. Biblesoft Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2015 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

3. One other shorter quotation would serve us as well: "Candace, a common or hereditary title of the queens who for many years succeeded one another in the island of Meroe, belonging to the ancient Ethiopia, as we learn from Strabo, Dio Cassius, and Pliny." (from Acts of the Apostles Explained, by Joseph Addison Alexander. Biblesoft Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2015 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

B. Before we begin the actual account and consider the main subject for this lesson please notice with me several verses out of this immediate context (Acts 8:26: reference to an angel of the Lord, instructing Philip to go to a certain place; Acts 8:29: "Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot"; Acts 8:39: "Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (v. 40 tells us where Philip was relocated to).

1. Here is an important aspect of this and any other study: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). Then, in 1 Corinthians 1:21 we find: "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe". Remember as well Romans 10:17: faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

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2. The involvement in the background of “an angel”; and “the Spirit” was not to relate to the Eunuch the gospel. That was always done by the agency of men, never by any Divine immediate communication or intervention in the Book of Acts. Philip will communicate the gospel!

C. Let’s see what we are told about this Ethiopian Eunuch:

1. Acts 8:27: “a man of Ethiopia”; “a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians”; this man “had charge of all her treasury”.

2. He “had come to Jerusalem to worship” (a long, long way by chariot).

3. He is now “returning” to his homeland (v. 28).

4. He had access to a scroll of “Isaiah the prophet” (v. 28). He could read whatever language the scroll was written in (Hebrew or Aramaic)

D. Philip “heard him reading” and that provided an opportunity (vv. 29-31)

1. He was reading from Isaiah 53:7-8.

2. He had a legitimate question (see Acts 8:34; “of whom?”)

E. Philip “opened his mouth” “beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him” (v. 35).

F. This man is very observant: to the words of Philip and to the surrounding landscape (v. 36)

G. Confession stood between him and his response (v. 37)

H. Upon confession he is baptized by Philip (both go down into water) (v.38). Philip is caught away. The eunuch “went on his way rejoicing”.

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Ethiopia was where Italy is now		
2.	Candace was a common name for their land		
3.	This man was a coin-counter		
4.	He had been to Jerusalem to worship		
5.	He was an educated man		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	What role did the angel and the Spirit have in this conversion?
2.	Explain why you should begin at the Scripture where a person is.
3.	What might we conclude Philip included in preaching Jesus?
4.	Why did Luke tell us they both went into the water?
5.	What does this Ethiopian Eunuch teach us about serving God?

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

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## **JOSHUA—Standing with God**



### **Introduction:**

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: ‘JOSHUA WAS THE PERSON CHOSEN TO LEAD ISRAEL INTO THE PROMISED LAND AFTER THE DAYS OF MOSES WHO HAD SHOWN HIS FAITH EARLIER IN HIS LIFE.’**

**A.** Our first meeting with Joshua in Scripture unfolds in Exodus 17:8-16. Moses has Joshua “choose us some men and go out and fight with Amalek” (v. 9). “So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek” (v. 10). It is a strange battle because Joshua is on the battlefield and Moses, Aaron and Hur went up on “the top of the hill” (v. 9). Moses had the “rod of God” in his hand (v. 9). When Moses held up his hand, “Israel prevailed” and when he put down his hand, Amalek prevailed” (v. 11). Moses sat on a rock and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side (v. 13). This partial victory would be an utter defeat one day later (in the days of King Saul, 1 Samuel 15:33). That situation would show the failure of King Saul and the truthfulness of God’s promise in Exodus 17:14).

**B.** Joshua is often referred to as “Joshua the son of Nun” (1 Kings 16:34; Nehemiah 8:17). The Book of Joshua covers a great portion of his life. When we first meet him he is “Joshua the son of Nun, a young man” (Exodus 33:11) and he is referred to as “Moses’ assistant, one of his choice men”. We learn in Numbers 13:16 that Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua”. In Joshua 23:1 we read “Joshua was old, advanced in age” (NKJV). The death of Joshua is given in Judges 2:8: “Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.”

**C.** Joshua was one of the greatest military leaders in the early days of Israel. His many battles and victories occupy the greater part of the Book of Joshua. The secret to his success in the military field was not only his courage and military prowess but the fact that God promised him victory (and in all the cases it was God who brought them to victory; see Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:28; 31:3; 31:7; Joshua 5:13-6:5).

**D.** God selected Joshua to be the leader after the death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34:9). God had inaugurated him while Moses was still living (see Deuteronomy 31:14-15).

**E.** At this place in our study let us look at some of the highlights in Joshua’s story and see what made this “ordinary man” so significant.

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1. There is no mention of his forebears except to say he was “the son of Nun”. We are told he is from Ephraim in Numbers 13:8, 16.
2. He arrives on the Scripture pages as a man who could raise an army and lead them out to battle.
3. He was a man that not too proud to serve another. He is described as Moses’ assistant (Exodus 24:13); one of “his choice men” (Numbers 11:28). The ESV renders that as “the assistant of Moses from his youth”.
4. Numbers 13 and 14 speaks of the spies being sent to check out the land of Canaan. Israel was just on the southern border at the time and within feet of entering. Twelve men were sent to check it out (including Joshua and Caleb; Numbers 13:6 and 8). After forty days they return (Numbers 13:25).
  - a. Ten of the twelve spies frightened the people and discouraged them from entering. Caleb wanted them to go. The people complained to Moses and Aaron (Numbers 14:1-5). Joshua and Caleb had great confidence in God (see their words in Numbers 14:6-12). Moses intercedes and God spares them from His wrath. Forty years of further wilderness wandering will die off all the older generation except Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:26-33; 38; 26:65).
  - b. Numbers 32:12: “for they have wholly followed the Lord”
5. Joshua 8:30-35: Joshua built an altar out of field stones (8:30-31), and read the words of the law, the blessings and the curses (all; 8:34-35).
6. Joshua was deceived (the Gibeonites: Joshua 9:3-27.)

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Joshua was blessed from his mother’s womb.		
2.	As a child Joshua was a terrible child		
3.	Joshua never boasted of his personal strength		
4.	Joshua’s strength was leading others for God		
5.	The Book of Judges shows when truth is forgotten.		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	Did Joshua have any supernatural powers? Give an example.
2.	What made Joshua and Caleb different than the other spies?
3.	Did Joshua have a wife and children? How do you know? (24:14-15)
4.	Did Joshua believe God had fulfilled His promises? (Josh. 22:14)
5.	What purpose did the visit in Joshua 5:13-15 serve?

**(See Addendum Pages at end of this study book.)**

# Ordinary People Rising

## CALEB— Wholly followed the Lord



### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS:** “CALEB IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO “WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD” AND IN DOING SO HAD CONFIDENT FAITH, TRUST AND COURAGE ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE.”

A. Our first meeting in Scripture with “Caleb” is found in **Numbers 13:30**: “from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh” (NKJV). **Numbers 32:12** refers to the same man in this fashion: “Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite”. Caleb’s younger brother Othniel (first judge of Israel? **Judges 3:9**; and also son-in-law to Caleb (Achsah Caleb’s daughter was his wife: **Joshua 15:16-17**). In **Judges 1:13-15** Caleb gives his daughter the upper and lower springs in the area near Kirjath Sepher (also known as Debir).

B. Here is some information on Debir: “Debir — oracle town; sanctuary.... It was originally one of the towns of the Anakim (Josh 15:15), and was also called Kirjath-sepher (q.v.) and Kirjath-sannah (49). Caleb, who had conquered and taken possession of the town and district of Hebron (Josh 14:6-15), offered the hand of his daughter to anyone who would successfully lead a party against Debir. Othniel, his younger brother (Judg 1:13; 3:9), achieved the conquest, and gained Achsah as his wife. She was not satisfied with the portion her father gave her, and as she was proceeding toward her new home, she ... said to him, "Give me a blessing [i.e., a dowry]: for thou hast given me a south land" (Josh 15:19, A.V.); or, as in the Revised Version, "Thou hast set me in the land of the south", i.e., in the Negeb, outside the rich valley of Hebron, in the dry and barren land. "Give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs." ..... "the well on the ridge", to the south of Hebron.” (Partial quote from Easton's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

C. **Judges 1:16** tells us the origins of the term “Kenizzite”: “Now the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the city of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people”. It is outside the scope of our current study but some suggest that they intermingled and became part of the tribe of Judah (as proselytes). There is no doubt as to the fact that Caleb was fully recognized as part of Judah in **Numbers 13:2, 6. 1 Chronicles 2:9, 18-21.**

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D. Caleb’s name in Hebrew means “raging with canine madness” (ISBE)

**What we learn about CALEB himself:**

A. He was **confident in God and in His ability to give them the land.**  
(Numbers 13:30)

B. Caleb finds approval with God (see **Numbers 14:24**: “because he has a different spirit in him, and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.” [*His faithfulness resulted in blessings for his offspring as long as they continued faithful before God.* **Deuteronomy 1:36**] [The “majority” vs. “the few” does not prevail when you stand with God.]

C. Though both Joshua and Caleb had to go with the rest of the people into what is called “wilderness wandering” (forty years of not entering the land) yet they willingly held on to God and their hope of entering the land (**Numbers 14:25-34**).

A plague (sent by God) removed the rest of the spies for their unfaithfulness and lack of trust in God (except Joshua and Caleb; **Numbers 14:35-38**)

D. Read **Joshua 14:10-12**. Here is an 85 year old whose strength had not diminished and he does not ask for an easy place but a difficult place to take. His greatest strength was his confidence: “It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said” (v. 12).

E. Joshua gave Caleb “Hebron” (**Joshua 14:13-14**). If this is at the end of the 40 years wilderness wandering, he would have been 45 when sent as a spy.

F. Caleb proves a difference between acting in “faith” and acting in “fear”.

**Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

**True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Caleb was in favor of taking the land.		
2.	Caleb and Joshua were spared from death by God		
3.	Two men of the older generation entered the land.		
4.	Caleb is connected with Judah		
5.	Even when old Caleb was still a warrior		

**Thought Questions**

1.	Why did Israel have to continue in the wilderness 40 years more?
2.	Did Moses and Aaron enter the promised land with others? Prove
3.	Establish that Caleb never seemed to diminish in strength in his latter years.
4.	What relationships did the first judge have with Caleb?
5.	How could you prove Caleb’s faith and faithfulness.

**(See Addendum pages at end of this study book on CALEB)**

# Ordinary People Rising

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## MORDECAI--A WISE UNCLE

9

**Introduction:**

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: MORDECAI APPEARS IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER AS A WISE COUNSELLOR TO HIS NIECE ESTHER. THOUGH GOD IS NOT NAMED IN THE BOOK HIS PROVIDENCE IS EVIDENT.**

**Background to our study:**

A. Some are ready to dismiss the Book of Esther from the canon of Scripture because there is not actual place in the book where the name of God is mentioned or recorded. Through providence (His care and exercise of His will outside of the miraculous realm) He is able to accomplish much. In the case of this book, there are references to Him and His influence without specifically naming Him (Esther 4:14: “relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish.”) (NKJV)

### **I. What do we know about Mordecai?**

A. The Book of Esther is speaking of people who were in the vast area ruled by Ahasuerus (King of the Medes and Persians at that time, also known as Xerxes I (485 B.C. -464 B.C.; who ruled over some 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia) close to the time that the return to the promised land was underway (led by Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah)

B. Our first introduction to Mordecai: Esther 2:5 through 2:20.

1. A certain Jew named Mordecai (v. 5)
2. The son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite (v. 5)
3. Kish (and apparently his family) had been “carried away from Jerusalem with the captives (v. 6)
4. Mordecai had brought up “his uncle’s daughter” “Hadassah, that is Esther” (v. 7). Her mother and father had died and “Mordecai took her as his own daughter” (v. 7).
5. When the king summoned “young virgins” Esther joined them (2:1-8). Esther found favor in the sight of Hegai the custodian of the women (2:9). Mordecai had counselled her wisely regarding her ethnicity or nationality (2:10). Mordecai checked on her daily (2:11).
6. When the king called a Feast for Esther (2:15-18) Mordecai “sat within the king’s gate” (v. 19). Esther kept quiet regarding her being a Jew as Mordecai had instructed her (2:20).

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- C. Mordecai learns of a plot to kill the king and has Esther (now Queen) to relate it to the king (2:21-23). It was recorded in the king’s record book (v. 23).
- D. A man name Haman enters the account (3:1) but Mordecai would not bow to him or pay homage (3:2). Mordecai has revealed he was a Jew (3:4) and this incensed Haman (see 3:5-15) to the extent that he called for the extermination of all of the Jews throughout the whole kingdom.
- E. Mordecai’s and other Jew’s reaction in Esther 4:1-3. Word reaches Queen Esther and she sends out someone to find out what is happening (4:4-9). Mordecai relates it is time for Esther to reveal her nationality (4:10-17). Mordecai and the others “fasted for three days and three nights” for Esther (4:15-17).
- F. Haman exults in his position (Mordecai still will not bow, 5:9-10) and begins to prepare a gallows to hang Mordecai (5:1-14). The king not sleeping calls for the Chronicles to be read and learns of Mordecai’s alert about assassins (6:1-11) and wants to reward him (further humiliation for Haman). Haman receives A warning from his friends regarding the Jews (6:13). Haman hangs on his own gallows (7:10)
- G. After the king learns of Mordecai’s connection to Esther he brings him in and makes him “over the house of Haman” (8:1-2).
- H. Esther pleads for her people and the king revokes the law against the Jews and exalts Mordecai (10:1-3).

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Mordecai was a wise counsellor to Esther		
2.	Esther forgot about Mordecai as Queen.		
3.	Haman hated Mordecai and all Jews		
4.	Mordecai saved the king’s life		
5.	Faithful persistence brought the needed result		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	How do we know this actually happened? (Explain Feast of Purim)
2.	Why was it necessary to be quiet about nationality at first?
3.	Tell the story of Haman’s lesson in humility with Mordecai
4.	Prove Mordecai had raised Esther to be true to her identity.
5.	What does it mean that “deliverance will arise for the Jews”?

**(See Addendum pages at end of this study book on Mordecai)**

# Ordinary People Rising

## JOSEPH OF OLD- ISRAEL'S SAFEGUARD

10

### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: JOSEPH OF OLD WAS THE FAVORED SON OF JACOB (OR ISRAEL) WHICH MADE HIM AN IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR HIS BROTHER'S HATRED AND GOD'S GREATER**

### PURPOSE.

A. Most children know immediately of Joseph when someone mentions the son with the coat of many colors.

B. A brief background study will help us see more of the background of this person.

1. Matthew 1:2: "Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers" (this is the family tree for Jesus Christ in the flesh, a descendant of Abraham).
2. Joseph is part of that picture but another branch on Jacob's tree.
3. Remember that Jacob had twelve sons and a daughter.
4. (Genesis 27 relates the claiming of the birthright [which Esau had given freely to him for a mess of pottage or lentil soup] (Genesis 27:30-40)
  - a. Jacob has the promise of Abraham (blessing of all nations through Abraham's seed, see Galatians 3:8) given to him (Genesis 28:10-14-22).

C. Jacob (the father of Joseph) desired the younger daughter Rachel as his wife (Genesis 29:13-20) and his father-in-law substituted her older sister on the wedding night (Leah) (Genesis 29:21-23)

D. Jacob agreed to work an additional seven years to have his beloved Rachel  
Jacob did not discover the switch of bride's until the next morning and he questioned Laban's actions (see Genesis 29:25-26). He also called upon Jacob to fulfil Leah's week and then he could wed Rachel (29:27-30)

- a. Each of the daughters was given a maid: Zilpah to Leah (29:24); Bilhah to Rachel (29:29).

E. We will soon get to Joseph but consider this chart: L=Leah; R=Rachel

L: Reuben	L: Simeon	L: Levi	L: Judah
B:R: Dan	B:R: Naphtali	Z:L: Gad	Z:L: Asher
L: Issachar	L: Zebulun	L: Dinah	R: Joseph
R: Benjamin	Genesis 25:16-20 Rachel dies at Ben Oni's birth		

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## I. Joseph and his story

A. The favored son and why his brothers hated him (Genesis 37:1-8; 9-11)

B. Joseph sent on a fateful journey to visit his brothers in Shechem (37:12-17) and finds they have moved to Dothan (37:17)

1. They want to kill him (37:18-20); Reuben spares him (37:21-22)
2. What they did with Joseph (37:23-28; Reuben returns to find Joseph is gone (37:29-33). Garment in dipped in animal blood, story concocted.
3. Jacob's grief over his son (37:34-35)

C. Joseph is sold to Potiphar (37:36). Joseph's success in Potiphar's service (39:1-6); problems come with Potiphar's wife (39:7-20)

1. Joseph's moral stand: (read 39:9) [A true example of a woman scorned.]

D. Joseph in prison (39:21-23). In prison he meets the butler and the baker (40:1-23) Joseph interprets dreams (with God's help: v. 8; Butler to be restored; baker to be killed (40:9-23). One request "remember me" (vv. 14-15) It took two years for that to happen (41:9-13).

E. Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's stand with God (41:1-8; 14-24). Joseph gives God credit for interpretation (41:25, 28, 32). Joseph is appointed (41:46-57)

F. Joseph's brothers minus Benjamin come to buy grain (42:1-5). Joseph in charge and brothers bow before him (42:6-14). They are to bring their youngest brother Benjamin (42:15-24); they find their money (see v. 28); Jacob is saddened by what they say (42:29-38). They go a second time with Benjamin (43:1-44:34). View 45:1-4; God sent me (45:5-15; 25-28; 50:15-26)

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Jacob's folks didn't want him to marry a Canaanite.		
2.	Jacob intended on marrying both of Laban's girls.		
3.	Joseph was Jacob's favorite son		
4.	Leah gave Jacob six of his sons and one daughter		
5.	Rachel was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	What special ability did God grant Joseph? Show Scriptures
2.	Joseph had highs and lows...what constant strength was his? Prove
3.	Joseph refused Potiphar's wife on two counts...what were they?
4.	What role did Joseph play in the famine relief in Egypt? Why?
5.	What was Joseph's desire in his old age? (Genesis 50:24-26)

**(See Addendum pages at end of this study book on Joseph)**

# Ordinary People Rising

## ABEL--Doing It God's Way

11

### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: ABEL WAS THE SECOND BORN SON OF ADAM AND EVE. EACH BROUGHT AN OFFERING TO GOD, ABEL DID IT GOD'S WAY AND RECEIVED HIS BLESSING.**

A. Our study tonight will focus on the two sons of Adam and Eve (Cain the eldest and Abel the youngest) (Genesis 4:1-15).

B. We will discuss this shortly, but let it be stated up front that this text not only establishes the family of Adam and Eve but also clearly shows the fallacy of the Calvinist notion of "Inherited Depravity" or "Adamic Sin". In simple language here is why we say that.

1. Both of the sons were direct descendants of Adam (and Eve). Ezekiel 18:20 declares that sin is non-transferable from generation to generation. Furthermore, Ezekiel demonstrates by showing three generations in Ezekiel 18:3-18: the first (grandfather) is good, right and holy (vv. 3-9); his son (father) is a terrible man (vv. 10-13); his son (grandson) is good, right and holy (vv. 14-18) that each person determines by his own actions what kind of a person he will be. So with Cain and Abel, both were born righteous and free from sin and both had access to offer worship to God. If they had been born in their father's sin, they could not have had that access. We will discover that the acceptance of either of them was not contingent on their father or anything to do with his life, it was on the basis of their own offering and whether it was received or not.

C. Abel (the younger of the two sons) was "a keeper of sheep" (Genesis 4:2). Cain was a "tiller of ground" (Genesis 4:2)

D. Cain chose to bring "an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord" (Genesis 4:3). Abel "also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat". The Lord "respected Abel and his offering" (see Hebrews 11:4).

E. The account turns to Cain and his disappointment over God not respecting his offering (Genesis 4:5-7: even God's reassurances could not quell the anger in Cain and satisfy him to the place where he could try to do better the next time)

F. The sons met in a field and conversed and Cain slew his brother (v. 8)

G. God asked one of those telling questions again? The first in this context was found in v. 6: "Why are you angry?" The second is found in v. 9: "Where is Abel your brother?" The third followed his pitiful response: "What have you done?" (v. 10).

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H. In the midst of that section we find these words of God regarding Abel: “The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground” (v. 10).

1. God is aware of the life or death of all His people (in this case Abel).
2. It is not that the actual blood spoke but the evidence of Cain slaying Abel was the evidence of what had been done to him. (cf. Matthew 23:29-31)

I. Jesus used Abel in a lesson of how the unrighteous have risen to slay the blood of the righteous “from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah” (Matthew 23:31-36; Luke 11:47-51).

J. Hebrews 11:4: “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” (NKJV)

1. We learn that it was “by faith” Abel offered his sacrifice (Romans 10:17).
2. We learn that Abel offered his sacrifice to God (Revelation 22:8-9)
3. It was not a competition between Abel and Cain, but a case of one seeking to please God and the other doing what pleased him.
4. Abel offered “a more excellent sacrifice than Cain”. The evaluation is not based on the cost expended (remember the widow’s mite: Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4).
5. Abel’s sacrifice was “more excellent” because it was what God asked for.

K. Hebrews 12:22-24 speaks of blood being shed and reaches back to Abel’s blood but contrasts that with the blood of the Lamb of God (Hebrews 12:22-24; Hebrews 10:9-10; 9:23-26; et al.)

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Abel was seven days old when Cain was born		
2.	As the eldest Abel was in charge of Cain		
3.	Cain was the first to murder someone on earth		
4.	Abel pleased God because sheep were expensive		
5.	Though dead Abel’s life still spoke volumes		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	Explain how there is no “inherited sin” in this chapter of Genesis.
2.	What passage would explain Abel’s success in his offering.
3.	What do we learn about displeasure and anger in this account?
4.	Can people still teach us after they are dead? How?
5.	What was the difference between Abel and Cain in their offerings?

**(See Addendum pages at end of this study book on the Abel)**

# Ordinary People Rising

## ENOCH--WALKED WITH GOD

12

### Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS: ENOCH WAS A MAN WHOSE LIFE CAN BE SUMMARIZED BY ONE IMPORTANT STATEMENT: “ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD; AND HE WAS NOT, FOR GOD TOOK HIM”**

- A. We are heading back to the Book of Genesis to discover more about this “ordinary man rising”.
- B. Genesis 5:18-20 shows us his arrival on the earth as a son of Jared.
- C. Genesis 5:21-24 gives us a brief summary of his life story:
1. Genesis 5:21 reveals how old Enoch was when Methuselah was born.
    - a. What makes Methuselah so memorable?
  2. Genesis 5:22: Enoch lived 300 years after Methuselah was born and “Enoch walked with God three hundred years”.
    - a. “And had sons and daughters” (other children beyond Methuselah)
  3. Genesis 5:23 reveals how many years he lived on earth (365 years)
- D. The most important thing said about him is found in Genesis 5:24: **“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him”**
1. Here is a man that did not experience death in the usual form.
  2. He was there “walking with God” and “he was not, for God took him”

### **SOME ADDITIONAL PASSAGES THAT MENTION METHUSELAH**

A. 1 Chronicles 1-9 are best summarized by these words in 1 Chronicles 9:1: “So all Israel was recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they were inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel. But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness”.

1. It is here in this listing that we find 1 Chronicles 1:1-4 which includes the generations beginning with Adam through Noah. An integral part of that listing is found in 1 Chronicles 1:3: Enoch (7<sup>th</sup> generation from Adam, and Noah’s great grandfather)

B. A similar listing is included in the earthly family tree of the Christ: Luke 3:23 shows that this is the family tree of Joseph. Jesus is linked in this passage with the lineage and is the “supposed son” of Joseph.

C. Let’s pick up a portion of this lineage from Luke 3:32-38

1. Enoch is listed in this section at verse 37: “the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan,” (NKJV)

D. Hebrews 11:5 records more about the reason for God taking him from the earth as we observed earlier. He has a place in the list of Old Testament worthies.

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1. "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (NKJV)

2. We learn from this passage that "walking with God" suggests a consistency of effort and walk that is of such a nature as to please God.

3. God is aware of each person and how they conduct themselves. Yes, even ordinary people like you and I.

4. Consider 1 Timothy 5:24-25 to see that God observes us, our actions and our activities.

5. Psalm 139:1-6 shows that in reality God knows more about us than we know about ourselves. We don't need the applause or praise of men for that can come and go, and a crowd can turn in a moment, but our God and Father watches over us. Jesus drove a similar point home in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 6:25-34).

E. One of the most telling verses on Enoch is found in the second last book of our New Testament in Jude 14: |"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,"(NKJV) To appreciate it we must consider the wider context and that would include Jude 12-15.

1. Enoch "prophesied" (forth told by inspiration) of God's displeasure in ungodly men and ungodly conduct. He warned of the doom ahead (the flood).

2. Jude 15 shows that lack of reverence and respect for God has consequences.

### **Some Simple Questions for Consideration:**

#### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	Enoch contributed to the ark fund in Noah's day		
2.	Enoch lived the bulk of his life away from God		
3.	Enoch walked with God		
4.	Enoch prophesied but still had to live his own life		
5.	Ungodliness is alright as long as man approved		

#### **Thought Questions**

1.	How was Enoch related to Adam and Eve? Explain your answer.
2.	Did God choose Enoch randomly, or was there a reason?
3.	Did Enoch just ignore the others around him in his day? Prove it.
4.	What equipped Enoch to "walk with God"?
5.	Is it possible for anyone else to not experience death in this world?

**(See Addendum pages at end of this study book on ENOCH)**

# Ordinary People Rising

## ORDINARY PEOPLE RISING: A Collage

13

Introduction:

**TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS:** “THE HONOR ROLL OF OLD TESTAMENT WORTHIES (HEBREWS 11) REACHES THE PLACE WHERE THE WRITER DECLARES: “AND WHAT MORE SHALL I SAY? HIS LIST COULD GO ON AND ON”

A. Our list of Bible characters who could be included in “Ordinary People Rising” could also go on and on. However, every Bible class teacher knows that you reach the place where you need to bring a series to an end.

B. This is the final lesson in Book Three and instead of a single person we are going to focus on some people that appear almost like a flash on the screen of Inspired Writings (the Bible) and then as quickly go back under the cover of oblivion. However, their appearance at the surface speaks volumes of who they were and all of them have this in common:

C. These are ordinary people who have been able to excel because God raised them up for a task or purpose and included mention of them in His revelation to man. One lesson cannot possible cover all of them.

**Some Additional People to take note of:**

A. **The widow of Zerephath in the days of Elijah** (1 Kings 17:8-16). This woman was willing to go and get the prophet Elijah a drink of water (she was willing to aid others) and then he asked for a more specific request (see vv. 11-12). Elijah went so far as to say that she was to bring him some first and then make some for her son and herself (v. 13). She did what he said (she was obedient and confident in the words of the prophet). The oil and flour never ran out (see vv. 15-16).

B. **The Shunammite woman in the days of Elisha** (2 Kings 4:8-11). She invited Elisha to have something to eat at her house and “as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat food” (v. 8). She conceived a plan and along with her husband prepared “a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there” (v. 10). He did that according to v. 11.

C. **Joseph, the husband of Mary** (Matthew 1:18-25). He was “betrothed to Mary” (v. 18) and “before they came together” (had a physical union) “she was found with child of the Holy Spirit” (v. 18). Betrothed in that day meant they were already considered “husband and wife” with pledges of purity and chasteness.

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1. Joseph was “a just man” (a good and honest man)
2. He didn’t want to cause her embarrassment and “not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly” (v. 19).
3. A visit of “the angel of the Lord” gave him insight on the whole matter and what was unfolding (see vv. 20-23). He was told about Mary’s conception and “who” she was bearing, and what He would be called (see the text).
4. Joseph when he woke up “did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife” (read vv. 24-25).
5. No mentions are made of Joseph after the visit to the temple when Jesus was about twelve years of age (Luke 2:41-52) except where he is mentioned in connection with Christ (Matthew 13:55; Luke 3:23; John 6:42, etc.)

## **D. The Greek ‘Syro-Phonecian’ Woman** (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)

She was in the region of Tyre and Sidon. This was a Greek woman (according to Mark 7:26) and this presented a problem because the work of Jesus and those he sent under the limited commission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). She “cried out to Him” (Matthew 15:22). He didn’t answer her and the disciples wanted to send her away (Matthew 15:23). She “came and worshiped Him,” saying, “Lord, help me!” (Matthew 15:25). She would settle for a crumb if it could be given (Matthew 15:27). She was commended “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be as you desire.” Her daughter was healed from that very hour.

E. Lots of others await discovery another day, maybe your life is one of them!

## **Some Simple Questions for Consideration**

### **True or False**

#	Statement	True	False
1.	The widow of Zerephath was protective of her son		
2.	The widow of Zerephath believed Elijah’s word		
3.	The Shunammite woman helped Elisha		
4.	Joseph was not related to Mary who bore Jesus		
5.	The Syro-Phonecian woman was earnest		

### **Thought Questions**

1.	What was the nature of the test of the widow of Zerephath?
2.	Using these notes describe an “Elisha room”
3.	Make a list of all you know about Joseph (the step-father of Jesus)
4.	Why did Jesus not readily respond to the Syro-Phonecian?
5.	How did she win His attention and was it worth it?

**(See Addendum pages at the end of this book on these folks.)**

# Ordinary People Rising

## **ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

### (1) Shiphrah and Puah— true midwives

#### A Character Study

This Addendum is to include some character traits of Shiphrah and Puah that we can appreciate and learn from:

A. Shiphrah and Puah were Hebrews. As physical descendants of Abraham they knew that any blessings God had promised could and would only be realized through His people (Israel; John 4:22; Galatians 3:8; 3:16).

B. These women had something that was needed to function properly in this role as “midwives” (they had compassion for mothers, and they truly cared for the little ones that they bringing into this world.

1. They did not view these infants as but a something which could be discarded and cast aside like refuse.
2. When this Pharaoh instructed them to destroy the male children and save the female (Exodus 1:16) it was contrary to everything they held sacred.
  - a. It would have violated the will of God (the One who gives life and observes life in the womb: Psalm 139:13-16; Job 10:8-12; etc.)
  - b. Like so many of the Old Testament people that we will meet they were concerned first and foremost with God and His will (“they feared God”; Exodus 1:17). They chose to obey God (Acts 5:29) and not the Pharaoh.
3. When we put God first in our choices, God will bless us. In the case of these two midwives we learn:
  - a. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty (Exodus 1:20).
  - b. “And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them” (Exodus 1:21).
4. Still wishing to destroy the Hebrews and disregarding God, the Pharaoh ordered his own people to destroy all the males born of the Hebrews (1:22).

# Ordinary People Rising

## **ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

### **(2) The Young Woman — Help for Naaman**

#### **Character Study:**

This Addendum is to include some character traits that can be discovered by considering some of the lesser players in the matter of Naaman, the captain of the Syrian army who was a leper.

A. The study itself begins with a picture of Naaman, and it is mentioned that God “had given victory to Syria” by him (2 Kings 5:1).

1. The class considered some of the outstanding characteristics of Naaman and they are listed in the notes earlier in this book (reference to Book Three, Lesson Two in Ordinary People Rising study.)

B. We first meet this young woman and learn how she entered the picture in v. 2.

1. The Syrians had made raids into Israel and took captives with them (v. 2)

2. They brought back captive a “young girl” (age is not given, but she is old enough to work in the household of Naaman and seems to be like an attendant to Naaman’s wife.)

3. We learn several things about this young woman:

a. She was honoring God by serving her mistress and master in the best possible attitude (1 Peter 2:18; 1 Timothy 6:1)

b. She was able to communicate freely with her mistress and seemed to be aware of the pressure that Naaman faced as a leper.

c. She was aware of a prophet in Israel (Elisha)

d. She had confidence that he could help Naaman.

e. She was not so bold as to approach Naaman himself but rather mentioned it to her Mistress, who in turn related it to Naaman.

C. We are made aware by this account that leprosy is a hideous, horrible disease and that it has a lot of impact on a man’s acceptance and his overall appearance. When Naaman hears of this possibility he relates it to the King of Syria.

D. The king of Syria wants him to go immediately it appears, and bear gifts of considerable worth with him. After Elisha intervenes Naaman comes to him.

# Ordinary People Rising

**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(3) Naaman's wise servants— if the prophet?**

### **Character Study:**

This Addendum is to include some character traits of the wise servants of Naaman that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. These “servants” are intricately woven into the story of Naaman.
- B. These “servants” are not named by the Holy Spirit, but we must understand that even if our name is not made public that God is aware of our doings both good and bad (1 Timothy 5:24-25; Psalm 139:1-12)
- C. To appreciate these servants we consider Naaman's behavior.
  1. He was a military leader who could capably command an army.
  2. He was appreciated by the King of Syria to whom he was answerable.
  3. He was a husband to a wife that apparently could talk with him and he would listen to what she was saying (she related what the young girl from Israel had said about a prophet in Israel).
  4. He was loved by his servants who referred to him as “father” (2 Kings 5:13), suggesting they were close to him.
  5. Yet, he was also a man who apparently had received respect and expected something similar.
  6. He was quick to temper when things did not unfold exactly as he expected they would.
    - a. When Elisha did not come out to greet him and simply sent a messenger it seems it might have ruffled his feathers (2 Kings 5:10-11)
    - b. When Elisha had suggested the muddy Jordan for dipping, he immediately was incensed by the fact that there were abundant clear streams in Syria. He went away in a rage, and still a leper.
- D. Enter the servants. They reason if the prophet had bid you do a great thing, wouldn't you have done it? How much more this simple thing? (2 Kings 5:13-14)
- E. Consider 2 Kings 5:14-19 to see how important their wisdom was.

# Ordinary People Rising

**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## (4) SILAS: A faithful worker with Paul

### A Character Study

This Addendum is to include some character traits of SILAS that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. Silas first enters the Bible text when the discussion about circumcision was discussed at Jerusalem (Acts 15:22: where Silas and Judas who was also named Barsabas were chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch in Syria to testify as to the resolution of the matter of circumcision for Gentiles.)
- B. Silas (and Judas of this text) were called “leading men among the brethren” (Acts 15:22).
- C. We would understand that Silas or Silvanus (one is Greek and the other is Latin) are both names that refer to the same man. [Paul and Saul; Timothy and Timotheus; etc.)
- D. Silas (and Judas) were both “prophets” (inspired mouth pieces for God during the time of spiritual gifts; Acts 15:32). As a result they “exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words” (Acts 15:32).
- E. When Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over the trustworthiness of John Mark we find they departed company. Paul took Silas with him and began the second preaching journey with him at his side (Acts 15:36-41). This actually allowed more work to be done with two experienced teachers leading the effort in different directions geographically.
- F. Paul and Silas knew persecution in Philippi, but their imprisonment led to the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:26-34).
- G. At Thessalonica the attacks continued against them and the brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night unto Berea (Acts 17:4-10).
- H. When the Jews came from Thessalonica to cause problems the brethren sent away Paul to Athens and Timothy and Silas continued there (Acts 17:15). Paul summoned them to come to him and they met at Corinth (Acts 18:5).
- I. Peter (1 Peter 5:12) referred to Silvanus as “a faithful brother as I considered him” (see also 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; and 2 Thessalonians 1:1)

# Ordinary People Rising

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**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(5) EBED-MELECH: A helpful Ethiopian Eunuch in Jeremiah's Day**

### **A Character Study**

This Addendum is to include some character traits of EBED-MELECH that we can appreciate and learn from (Jeremiah 1:2-3):

- A. Some background on Jeremiah is essential to appreciate the role that EBED-MELECH played in his story.
- B. Using the text of Jeremiah 1:1-3 we can read that Jeremiah served during the days of the following kings, here's the text: "The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, 2 to whom the word of the Lord **came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah**, in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It came also **in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah**, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. (NKJV)
  1. A chart courtesy of <http://www.idolphin.org/kings.html> shows the following successful kings in a charge of the Kings of Israel and Judah
  2. Josiah (642-640) 2 years bad; Jehoahaz (640-68) 31 years good; Jehoiakim (608-597) 3 months bad; Jehoiachin (597) bad; and Zedekiah (597-586) 11 years bad.
  3. Jereboam would not go into captivity but remain in the land. The rest of the nation was either defeated or taken away into Babylonian Captivity (586 BC, Babylonian Captivity).
  4. Jeremiah's role as not an easy one. False prophets were offering other advice and God continued to declare things through Jeremiah.
- C. Ebed-Melech is introduced in Jeremiah 38:7a.
- D. He reports to the king about what others had done with Jeremiah (38:7-9)
- E. The king instructs him to rescue Jeremiah before he perishes. (Read Jeremiah 38:10-13). Consider his end because of God (Jeremiah 39:15-18)

# Ordinary People Rising

## **ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

### **(6) An Ethiopian eunuch— *learns of Jesus***

#### **A Character Study**

This Addendum includes some character traits of the eunuch in Acts 8 that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. There are several things that we learn about this man from the account.
  - 1. He was an “Ethiopian eunuch” (Acts 8:27)
  - 2. He was “a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen “
  - 3. This man “had charge of all her treasury”.
  - 4. This man had some affiliation with Judaism-- he “had come to Jerusalem to worship” (commentators suggest he was a proselyte).
    - a. This man may be acquainted with God but not with God’s Son, unless He is familiar with Old Testament Scriptures and Messianic Promises (see Luke 24:26-27 and Luke 24:44-47)
  - 5. This man was capable of reading the scroll in Hebrew or Aramaic.
- B. Something about his religious background prior to his conversion:
  - 1. He did not think it was beyond him to travel from beyond the center of Egypt to Jerusalem to worship God.
    - a. He was riding in an open chariot it appears (Acts 8:28-30)
  - 2. His intent on that trip was to come to Jerusalem to “worship” (v. 27)
  - 3. His interest was such that somehow he acquired a scroll of Isaiah that he could handle and read himself (v. 28).
- C. In the background God is coordinating things by sending a preacher to connect with him (see Acts 8:26, 8:29; and 8:39).
  - 1. Neither the angel nor the Spirit spoke directly to the Eunuch, Philip would communicate the message of the gospel.
  - 2. The eunuch had thought through the possibilities (v. 34)
  - 3. Philip preached “Jesus” unto him (v. 35) from that place in Scripture.
  - 4. He saw the water (implying that water baptism in involved) (v. 36)
  - 5. His confession stood between him and his response to Christ (v. 37)
  - 6. He was baptized (immersed) in water (see vv. 38-39)

# Ordinary People Rising

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## **ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

### **(7) JOSHUA—Standing with God**

#### **A Character Study**

This Addendum is to include some character traits of JOSHUA that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. A true leader is not below humbling himself and doing lowly tasks. Jesus “washed the disciples feet” (John 13:1-15), and we learn early that Joshua was an “assistant” and a “servant of Moses” as young man (Exodus 24:13; 33:11).
- B. Joshua was ready to raise an army and to lead them against Amalek. The strange battle ensued on the plain and was governed by Moses raising his hands (some suggest in prayer, bvs) and when his hands were raised they enjoyed a victory, but when lowered they were having difficulties. Aaron on one side and Hur (some suggest... the husband of Miriam) held up his arms and the victory went to Joshua. God also made it known that one day Amalek would be destroyed and defeated completely (what proved to be a failure on the part of King Saul, became a victory on the part of Samuel: 1 Samuel 15).
- C. Joshua’s life is encompassed within the Scriptures. We meet him as a young man (Exodus 33:11) and the record of his life reaches to 110 years (Joshua 23:1 and Judges 2:8.)
- D. The military victories of Joshua make up the book of Joshua and they are great demonstrations of God giving Israel victory, but they are outside of the scope of our current study.
- E. Joshua and Caleb demonstrate strength and confidence in God in the matter of spying out the land. They alone of the older generation will get to go into the land. The rest of the spies will die by a plague and the old generation will perish before the entrance to the land begins (40 years later).
- F. God picked Joshua to take the leadership of Israel at Moses’ death and inaugurated him to the task (see Deuteronomy 34:9, 31:14-15)
- G. Joshua 8:30-35 shows him building an altar out of field stones (8:30-31), and reading the law to the people (8:34-35).

# Ordinary People Rising

## **ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

### **(8) CALEB— Wholly followed the Lord**

#### **A Character Study**

This Addendum is to include some character traits of CALEB that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. Caleb was the leader chosen out of Judah to go and spy out the land in Numbers 13:2, 6.
- B. There is some suggestion that his forebears may have been related to Moses' father-in-law Jethro (his offspring were referred to as Kenites or Kenizites in Judges 1:16; 1 Chronicles 2:9; 18-21).
- C. No mention is made of any specific spiritual gift that God gave Caleb but God refers to him as one "who wholly followed Me" (Numbers 14:24).
- D. He is spoken of as having "a different spirit in him" (not one of fear before his enemies but of certain and sure trust in God and His power). (Numbers 14:24)
- E. He is around 45 when the wilderness wandering begins and at 85 his strength had not diminished (see Joshua 14:10-12). He is strong because of his confidence in God. He declared: "It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said"
- F. His confidence in God gave him a land that he could claim as his own, and it remained in his household for all the generations that they remained faithful as their father had been. (Numbers 14:24)
- G. His age did not stand between him and serving God or claiming what God had promised through Moses (Joshua 14:10-14)
- H. Caleb gave his daughter to the man who could conquer the rest of the territory and his younger brother Othniel did it and claimed his daughter (Joshua 15:13-19).
- I. Caleb was not daunted by the giants that lived in the land he desired, with God no giant or family of giants was too big to take on or conquer (Joshua 14:7-15).
- J. Joshua and Caleb alone entered the land, the other spies perished in a plague from God and the rest of their generation died in the wilderness.

# Ordinary People Rising

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**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(9) MORDECAI--A WISE UNCLE**

### **A Character Study**

This Addendum is to include some character traits of MORDECAI that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. Mordecai is an important character in the Book of Esther.
- B. Esther 2:5-6 reveals several things about his lineage:
  - 1. He is a Jew living in the Kingdom of Ahasuerus (king of the Medes and Persians) near the time of the return from captivity (days of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah)
  - 2. He is the “son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite” (Esther 2:5)
  - 3. His family was carried away from Jerusalem by the Babylonians around the same time as Jeconiah (Coniah) was carried away. When the Medes and Persians took over, those held captive by Babylon came under the Medes and Persians.
- C. Another important character is also introduced: Esther or Hadassah (2:7)
  - 1. She was left orphaned when both her parents died.
  - 2. Mordecai took over her guardianship and guided her with the love of a father (v. 7).
  - 3. Even as a grown-up she still respected his counsel and advice (2:20).
- D. Mordecai learns of a possible coup attempt and advises Queen Esther and she tells the king. The plot is foiled and the men are put to death. It is recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the king and will resurface later in the book.
- E. Wicked Haman is incensed against Mordecai and all the Jews but the providence of God saves the day through Esther.
- F. Mordecai is remembered and exalted (See Esther 4:1-17; 8:1-2; 10:1-3.)
- G. Wicked Haman is hung on his own gallows and Mordecai rules over his people and holdings. The Jews are spared and rise in the kingdom.
- H. Esther creates the feast of Purim and it is still celebrated (Esther 9:26-28).

# Ordinary People Rising

**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(10) JOSEPH OF OLD -- ISRAEL'S SAFEGUARD**

### **A Character Study**

Some character traits of Joseph that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. Even though Joseph was not in the immediate line of Christ, he would play a role in saving his father's house while he was in Egypt, that would allow the promises to happen that would see the Christ come into the world through his father's descendants.
- B. Joseph was the son of Jacob (in his old age, Genesis 37:3) and we might point out he was also the first son of Jacob's beloved Rachel (Genesis 30:22-24).
- C. Joseph was blessed by God with the ability to interpret dreams (though he was fully persuaded it was not his power but God's power to do so: see Genesis 41:14-16; 41:25; 41:28; 41:32; 41:38-40).
- D. Joseph hides his identify from his brothers when they come to seek grain and persuades them to go and get the youngest of the brothers (Genesis 42:7-8). Reuben's words caused a reaction to Joseph (Genesis 42:18-24)
- E. Jacob was not pleased with the request for the younger brother (see Genesis 42:38).
- E. The famine continues and Jacob has no choice but to allow Benjamin to go with them (43:11-14) and hopes that God may "give you mercy".
- F. Joseph cannot contain himself any longer and reveals himself to his brothers (who have already bowed before him) (see Genesis 43:26-34) and Genesis 45:1-15).
- G. Joseph had a difficult life because of the favoritism shown to him by his father, but in Egypt it had been his trust in God that helped him rise in each and every position he held in Potiphar's house, in prison and in Pharaoh's service. Hated in his youth, sold to traders, sold again to Potiphar, desired by Potiphar's wife but stalwart in his faithfulness to God and his master he was falsely accused and thrown into prison. Even there God strengthened him and he rose to the top. Finally, in Egypt he rose to second only to Pharaoh and spared his father and his family. With God's power he could interpret dreams but the rest was Joseph.

# Ordinary People Rising

**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(11) ABEL-- DOING IT GOD'S WAY**

### **A Character Study**

Some character traits of ABEL that we can appreciate and learn from:

- A. Abel was not one who did what others did. While his older brother Cain offered the firstfruits of the ground, Abel was determined to offer the firstfruits of his flock (more in accord with what God had called for, see Hebrews 11:4)
- B. Abel demonstrates that though his father had sinned in his lifetime and separated himself from fellowship with God it did not mean that they were contaminated because of his sin (Calvinism's "inherited depravity") or deprived of their own choice to serve or reject God's way of doing things. (cf. Ezekiel 18:3-20)
- C. Cain demonstrates clearly how displeasure with someone else's success can lead to your own anger and failure (he was rejected by God and grew angry over his brother's success to the point that he slew him.
- D. Abel shows that sometimes greater lessons can be drawn from one's life after their death (the great value of a funeral or memorial service.) In this case, we are told twice in the Bible that "his blood spoke": once declaring by its existence that he had fallen at his own brother's hands, and once in the New Testament to show that he was a righteous man slain by an unrighteous man. (see Matthew 23:31-36; Hebrews 11:4)
- E. Abel did what he did by faith (according to Hebrews 11:4). Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of the Lord, we have God communicating what He desired and one responding and the other refusing to do so.
- F. The contrast between the blood of Abel sacrificed in his area and the blood of Christ in the New Testament times is given in Hebrews 12:22-24. The superiority of the blood of Christ is apparent because it took away one covenant and brought in another by which we can be sanctified.
- G. Abel was spoken of as "righteous" because in his short story there is no other action revealed or attributed to him other than his obedience to God.
- H. Abel's story truly is written to help us appreciate what pleases God.

# Ordinary People Rising

**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(12) ENOCH-- Walked with God**

### **A Character Study**

Some character traits of Enoch that we can appreciate and learn from:

A. The last context in which Enoch's name is mentioned in the New Testament tells us much of the general condition of the world in which he lived (see Jude 12-15).

1. We draw attention to this so that people of today can't say that the world of his day was easier than our world of today.

2. He was Noah's great grandfather (about three generations before the time of the flood) and we all remember the situation at the time of the flood in Noah's day: "Then the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." (Genesis 6:5-6; NKJV)

3. Here is what we learn that Enoch prophesied (the only reference to him being empowered to speak forth the will of God): Jude 14-15: "14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are **ungodly among them** of all **their ungodly deeds** which **they have committed in an ungodly way**, and of all the harsh things which **ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.**" (NKJV)

4. Simplest definition of "ungodly": failing to reverence or respect God, lack of respect for God and His word or will. Nothing new under the sun, is there?

B. Enoch lived for some 365 years (Genesis 5:23).

C. According to Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (a walking with God for over 300 years)

1. Further insight on why he was taken is given through Hebrews 11:5: "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

# Ordinary People Rising

**ADDENDUM:** [Further Thoughts on the  
Midweek Bible Study: *Ordinary People Rising*]

## **(13) ORDINARY PEOPLE RISING-- A Collage**

### **A Character Study**

Some character traits of these folks mentioned in our “Collage” that we can appreciate and learn from:

A. The widow of Zerephath teaches that when God promises something (in this case through the lips of His prophet Elijah) that it will come to pass exactly as God said. Her little flour and sparse oil was able to supply first for the prophet and then for her and her son. It did not run out but provided for them all even as God had revealed it would.

1. Sometimes we have to be prepared to give up what we have and God will supply us with the necessary things: case-in-point free-will offering in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; those of Macedonia in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; the widow with the two mites in the days of Christ (we trust God provided for her when she gave Him her all: Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2).

B. The Shunammite woman teaches us that hospitality is opening your heart and your home. She didn't begrudge the prophet Elisha what he ate on his visits, but suggested to her husband that they could better accommodate him by what we like to style “an Elisha room”. Instead of having something to eat and wondering where he could settle for the night, whenever he was near he could stop in an his room was waiting, complete with bed, table, chair and some form of lighting.

C. Joseph who is often over-looked or lost in the shuffle around the birth of Jesus was noteworthy. We learn much about this decent and fair-minded man from the gospel of Matthew. The angel of the Lord announced to him what would unfold with his betrothed wife Mary and how she was found with child. Joseph was compliant with the will of God and honored his commitment to Mary and his respect for God (they did not come together physically until after the Christ-child was born). When it came time to name this child Joseph followed the will of Heaven and named Him “Jesus”. (Matthew 1:21-25)

D. The Syro-Phonecian woman teaches that God included the Gentiles in His plan of salvation through Christ. She had confidence in Jesus and was not to be turned aside quickly. Her faith led to her persistence which led to the healing.