

Last week you learnt about John Wycliffe who preached the truth and wrote many booklets about the Bible in a time when Satan's control was very strong and religious freedom was virtually unheard of. As you can imagine, he soon came to the notice of the Pope and other leaders of the church who decided that he must be stopped; but God had other ideas.

The first time he was called before a council of Bishops (church leaders) in England, he was accompanied by two important princes and the courtroom was filled with people supporting him so they let him go. Then the Pope died and two rival Popes were elected – each claiming to be God, and calling the other the antichrist! So there was civil war in the church and John Wycliffe was left alone.

Now John was not content just to preach and publish the truth, he decided to translate the entire Bible into English so that the people could read for themselves.

But before he could finish, he was struck down by a serious illness; representatives from the church came to his death bed telling him he was dying because of his sins; but he suddenly told them that they were wrong and he would not die! And that is what happened.

At last the first English Bible was finished. There was no printing press in those days, so writers immediately set to work copying it by hand. There was so much demand for it that they couldn't keep up. Some rich people bought a copy of the entire Bible; many people bought parts of the Bible and often a group would combine together to purchase a copy to share.

Nearly half of the people in England accepted the truth! Now Satan renewed his effort to kill John Wycliffe and John fully expected to become a martyr. Three times he was called before different courts, but each time the Spirit of God came on him and he spoke with such power that the court couldn't say or do anything. When he did die, it was as a free man in his own church.

God did not bless John Wycliffe with money, with an easy life or even with good health; but he was blessed by God's protection of his life, by the satisfaction of doing a great work for God and sharing the good news of salvation with more people than we will ever imagine.

With or Without God

Sabbath

Read these promises, fill in the missing words and then solve the crossword.

Deuteronomy 30:15-18^{NLT} "Now listen! Today I am giving you are choice between _____ (4a) and _____ (6d), between _____ (12a) and disaster. For I command you this day to _____ (1d) the _____ (13a) your _____ (2a) and to keep his _____ (7d), _____ (6a) and regulations by walking in His ways. If you do this you will live and multiply, and the Lord your God will _____ (5d) you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. But if your _____ (11d) turns away and you refuse to listen, and you are drawn away to serve _____ (1) and worship other gods, then I warn you now that you will _____ (2) certainly be destroyed. You will not _____ (8a) _____ (3) long, good life in the land you are crossing the _____ (4) _____ (5) _____ (6) _____ (7) _____ (8) _____ (9) _____ (10) _____ (11) _____ (12) _____ (13) _____ (14) _____ (15) _____ (16) _____ (17) _____ (18) _____ (19) _____ (20) _____ (21) _____ (22) _____ (23) _____ (24) _____ (25) _____ (26) _____ (27) _____ (28) _____ (29) _____ (30) _____ (31) _____ (32) _____ (33) _____ (34) _____ (35) _____ (36) _____ (37) _____ (38) _____ (39) _____ (40) _____ (41) _____ (42) _____ (43) _____ (44) _____ (45) _____ (46) _____ (47) _____ (48) _____ (49) _____ (50) _____ (51) _____ (52) _____ (53) _____ (54) _____ (55) _____ (56) _____ (57) _____ (58) _____ (59) _____ (60) _____ (61) _____ (62) _____ (63) _____ (64) _____ (65) _____ (66) _____ (67) _____ (68) _____ (69) _____ (70) _____ (71) _____ (72) _____ (73) _____ (74) _____ (75) _____ (76) _____ (77) _____ (78) _____ (79) _____ (80) _____ (81) _____ (82) _____ (83) _____ (84) _____ (85) _____ (86) _____ (87) 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Sunday

King Solomon knew that his great wisdom came from God but still, he did not follow God in all matters and it led both him, and the whole nation of Israel, into trouble. Instead of having only one wife who was also a believer in God, the Bible says "He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray." 1 Kings 11:3^{NLT}. In fact, the Bible says he even built temples for the gods of all of his foreign wives!

God promised David that his family would rule forever; but when Solomon worshiped idols, God said they would lose part of the kingdom.

One day the prophet Ahijah met Jeroboam, who was in charge of Solomon's workers. Ahijah took off his new cloak and tore it into twelve pieces and said, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for God says that He will tear part of the kingdom from Solomon's son and give you ten tribes. If you obey as David did, He will make you a great nation."

When Solomon heard, he tried to kill Jeroboam.

Solomon eventually turned back to God but the damage had already been done. When Solomon died his son Rehoboam became king; Rehoboam didn't love God and after listening to the advice of his friends he determined to be a tough king, forcing the people to work even harder for him and making them pay more taxes. He refused to listen to the advice of the elders. The ten northern tribes rebelled and chose Jeroboam to be their own king, and the kingdom was spilt in two. Rehoboam called Judah and Benjamin to fight, but God told them not to and they obeyed.

For seventeen years, Rehoboam led Judah away from God and he built many idols. While he was king, Egypt raided and carried away gold and jewels from the temple of God. After Rehoboam, his son Abijah ruled three years and after that Abijah's son, Asa became the king, but unlike his father and grandfather, Asa loved and followed God. During this time there was war between Judah and Israel.

Friday

God has promised to bless all who follow Him, but the blessing of one person may not be the same as the blessing of another. Some people are blessed financially; some people are blessed with a long life or a good family. Others are blessed in ways that allow them to do a special work for God. Some people think that being blessed means that everything will be easy or happy – but this is not always the case. Blessing can even happen in times of trouble.

In Matthew 5:3-12^{NIV} Jesus spoke of some of the blessing for Christians. Use your Bible to join the situation on the left with the blessing on the right.

Blessed are the:

- Poor in Spirit (sad, tired, discouraged)
Mourn
- Meek
- Hunger and thirst (really want, desire)
for righteousness
- Merciful
- Pure in heart
- Peacemakers
- Persecuted because of righteousness
- Insulted, persecuted, lied about

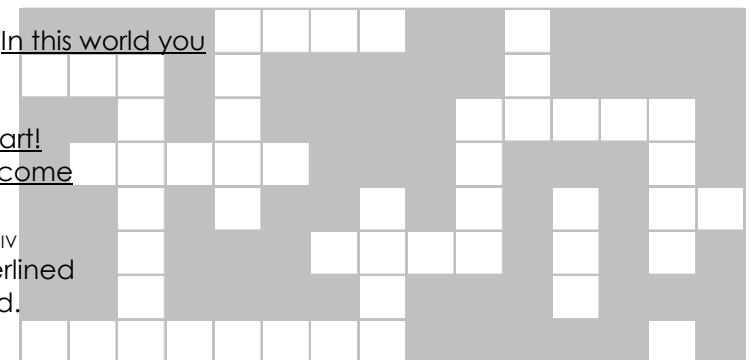
For they will have/be:

Filled
The kingdom of heaven
Comforted
Shown mercy
The kingdom of heaven
Inherit the earth
See God
Called children of God
A reward in heaven

Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble.
But take heart!
I have overcome the world."

John 16:33^{NIV}

Fit the underlined words in grid.



Thursday

Did you notice that when Solomon turned away from God, God offered the promise to become a great nation to Jeroboam? Read God's promise in 1 Kings 11:38 and write it in your own words.

Then, when Jeroboam chose not to accept God's promise, God gave it to Baasha. Read 1 Kings 16:1-3.

God will also bless you if you give your life to Him. Here are some verses about the blessings that God wants to give you. Find the underlined and missing words in the grid below.

Proverbs 16:3^{NLT} "_____ your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed."

Philippians 4:19^{NIV} "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus."

Malachi 3:10^{NIV}, "Bring the whole _____ into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much _____ that there will not be room enough to store it."

1 John 1:9^{NIV}, "If we confess our sins, He is _____ and just and will _____ us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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

Monday

The history of the northern tribes is even worse. Jeroboam did not want the ten tribes to travel to Jerusalem to worship; he feared they would reunite with Judah, so he set up altars and two golden calves for the people to worship. He created festivals and chose new priests.

One day as he was preparing to offer a sacrifice, a man of God came from Judah to say that a descendant of David would sacrifice Jeroboam's priests on his own altar and that the altar would split apart as a sign. As Jeroboam pointed and cried "Seize him!" the altar split in half and Jeroboam's hand froze and shrivelled up - still pointing! When Jeroboam asked, God restored his hand; but still he did not change his evil ways and God finally warned him that his family line would end.

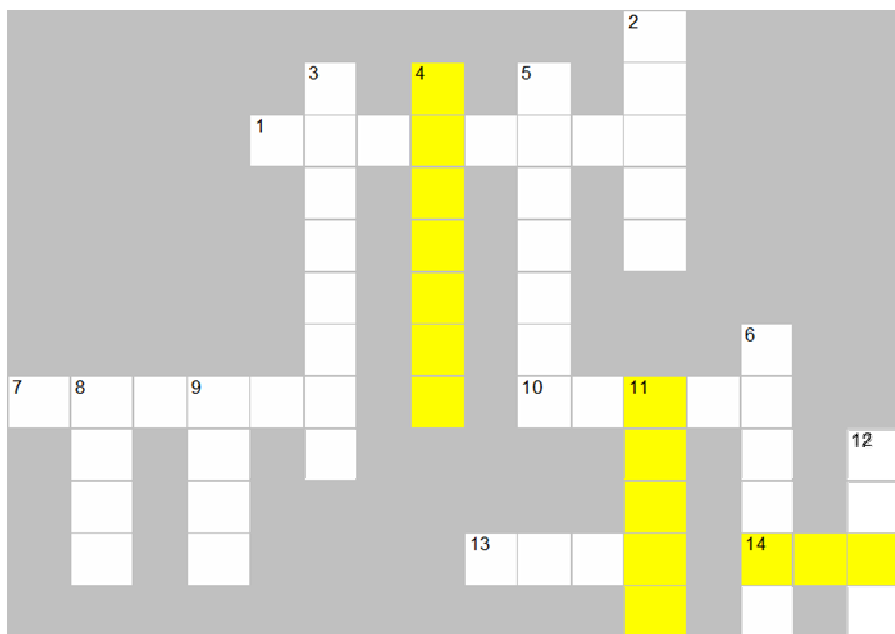
Jeroboam's son Nadab became king, but he ruled only two years before Baasha from Issachar killed him and all their family. Baasha was king for twenty-four years but he also worshiped idols so God sent word that his family would suffer the same fate as Jeroboam's. Baasha's son Elah reigned only two years before Zimri, an official, killed him and crowned himself king. Then Zimri killed all of Baasha's descendants just as God had foretold. Zimri was king only seven days before the army of Israel crowned Omri. Some people wanted Tibni to be king but Omri's army proved stronger than both Zimri and Tibni's supporters. Omri ruled for twelve years and was followed by his son Ahab. They all rejected God and worshiped idols.

During David and Solomon's time, the kingdom of Israel had been a powerful force; they defeated their enemies and grew rich; Solomon had built the beautiful temple and palaces. When they were following God, everything they did succeeded. Now, the kingdom was divided; most of the people had forgotten God; they spent many years fighting amongst themselves and their enemies raided them and stole their riches. The kingdom of Israel was no longer something to be admired, no longer a witness for God.

Tuesday

Use the clues to fill in the crossword. Most of these kings did not follow God; only those highlighted in yellow did.

1. 1 Kings 14:21, 22
2. 1 Kings 16:15, 18-19
3. 1 Kings 12:31
4. A king who loved God: 1 Kings 9
5. 1 Kings 11:6
6. 1 Kings 15:1-3
7. 1 Kings 15:33, 34
8. 1 Kings 16:30
9. 1 Samuel 15:23, 24
10. 1 Kings 15:25, 26
11. A king who loved God: Acts 13:22
12. 1 Kings 16:8, 13
13. 1 Kings 16:25
14. A king who loved God: 1 Kings 15:11



Wednesday

Fit these words that describe the kingdom of Israel, the yellow spaces describe when they followed God and the grey when they followed other gods.

9 Letter words:

beautiful

8 Letter words:

powerful,

defeated

7 Letter words:

winners, divided

unhappy

6 Letter words:

strong, famous,

sinful

5 Letter words:

great, happy,

Godly

4 Letter words:

wise, rich, evil,

weak, poor.

