

## All Show and No Go 9-25-05

Matthew 21:18-22 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup>Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry.  
<sup>19</sup>Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. <sup>20</sup>When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. <sup>21</sup>Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. <sup>22</sup>If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

On Monday morning Jesus presented Himself to Jerusalem. (Matthew 21:10) Though the crowds praised Him like a king, He wept for the hardness of their hearts and for what He saw coming to the nation and its temple. (Luke 19:41-45)

On Tuesday He cleaned out the corrupt practices that were taking place in the outer court. He chased out the merchants and moneychangers. He told them it was supposed to be a house of prayer for all nations, (Mark 11:17) but that they had turned it into a den of thieves. (Luke 19:46)

Today's passage took place on Wednesday morning. Jesus must have spent the night in the home of His friends in Bethany, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. (Mark 11:11) He often got up early to pray, even before dawn. <sup>18</sup>Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Sometimes we think of Jesus as this superman who never struggled with the things we face. He was as human as you and me. He got hungry just like we do. He was tired at times, just like we get tired. He was even tempted in every way like we are tempted, but never succumbed to the temptations. Jesus can relate to everything you experience. (Hebrews 4:15)

<sup>19</sup>Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. We tend to read this passage with our own weaknesses in mind. It sounds so out of place for Jesus. Was He upset because He did not get what He wanted and so cursed the tree? That can hardly be the case. The temptation in the wilderness was an effort to get Him to do a self-serving miracle, and He refused. (Matthew 4:2-3) The religious leaders tried to get Him to do a grandiose miracle, and He refused. (Matthew 12:38) Jesus never acted in an 'out of control' manner. Even the cleansing of the Temple was an exercise in divine wrath for the sake of others. So what could this mean?

The fig tree is mentioned many times in Scripture. It was valued for its shade and fruit. Even today in Cypress, fig trees are planted at the door of one's home to provide a shaded entry. They can grow to be quite large. While in Israel, I observed some old fig trees that must have been a couple of feet thick with branches spreading over twenty feet. They fruit twice a year. The older wood fruits in the early Summer, and then the new growth fruits in the Fall. The fig tree is somewhat unique in that it has flowers, fruit, and leaves all at the same time. Our passage takes place in mid-

**Commented [notes1]:** <sup>10</sup> When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"  
Matthew 21:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** <sup>41</sup> As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it <sup>42</sup> and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup> They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."  
Luke 19:41-44 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** <sup>17</sup> And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: "'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"  
Mark 11:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** <sup>46</sup> "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"  
Luke 19:46 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** <sup>11</sup> Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.  
Mark 11:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.  
Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** <sup>2</sup> After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."  
Matthew 4:2-3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** <sup>38</sup> Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."  
Matthew 12:38 (NIV)

April. It was too early for Jerusalem fig trees to fruit, but this one, a freak of nature, already had leaves. (Mark 11:13) If it leafed early, it should also have born fruit early.

The fig was mentioned as one of the blessings of the land of Israel. (Deuteronomy 8:8) When people were blessed of God they were said to be able to sit in the shade of their own vine and fig. (Zechariah 3:9-10) Conversely, when they were cursed, their vine and fig dried up. (Psalm 105:33; Jeremiah 8:13)

When the prophets were not being heard by the people, they were often directed to act out their message. They symbolically enacted what was to come through drama or analogies. (Jeremiah 13:10) Jesus often told parables and often performed miracles. This was a miracle parable. He wanted the lesson to sink deep into His disciples' minds and hearts. He hopes the same for us today as we think on its significance.

There is one other story of a fig tree in the book of Luke. (Luke 13:6-9) In that story, the master tells his servant to chop down the fruitless fig tree. For three years it had not born any fruit. The gardener asked for one more chance to fertilize the tree and see if it would bear. If it did not, he promised to cut it down. I cannot help but see the parallel with Jesus' three years of ministry to Israel. John the Baptist had prepared the way. Jesus had given undeniable evidence that He was the Messiah. Yet, He was not offering the kind of salvation they wanted. Theirs was a selfish desire for physical deliverance from Rome and taxation. We have reached the end of that third year. Israel had plenty of leaves. There were all kinds of religious activities, but much of it was turning people from God rather than drawing them to Him. (Matthew 23:3-4) The prediction of John the Baptist was coming to pass, <sup>10</sup>*The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.* Matthew 3:10 (NIV) Jesus was demonstrating that the time John predicted had come.

God set Israel at the crossroads of the world and intended His house to be a place that drew people of the world to the God of Israel. As they brought their trade goods from the North to the South or the East to the West, they went through Israel with its magnificent Temple. They had a chance to see if the God of Israel was any different from their own. (2 Chronicles 6:32-33) Instead they saw the same greed and corruption that they were familiar with and reached a wrong conclusion. There were a lot of leaves, a lot of religious ritual and show, but no fruit. (Romans 10:2)

God told Israel that if they would obey they would be blessed in every way. (Deuteronomy 28:1-6) He also told them that if they did not obey they would be cursed in every way. (Deuteronomy 28:15-19) And what is the chief commandment they were to obey? It is to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second is like to it, to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-40) And who is our neighbor but everyone we come in contact with. (Luke 10:36)

Israel of Jesus' day looked down on their neighbors. They hated the Samaritans. (John 4:9) They shook the Gentile dust off their clothes after walking through their land. Contempt was the general attitude toward neighbors, not love. In these, the greatest of commands upon which all the other commands are derived, Israel had failed miserably. The first and foremost fruit of love was missing. Therefore the curse

**Commented [notes9]:** <sup>13</sup> Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.  
Mark 11:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** <sup>8</sup> a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey;  
Deuteronomy 8:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** <sup>9</sup> See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day. <sup>10</sup> 'In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."  
Zechariah 3:9-10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** <sup>33</sup> he struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country.  
Psalms 105:33 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** <sup>13</sup> "I will take away their harvest, declares the LORD. There will be no grapes on the vine. There will be no figs on the tree, and their leaves will wither. What I have given them will be taken from them."  
Jeremiah 8:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** <sup>10</sup> These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt-- completely useless! ... [1]

**Commented [notes15]:** <sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. <sup>7</sup> ... [2]

**Commented [notes16]:** <sup>3</sup> So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ... [3]

**Commented [notes17]:** <sup>32</sup> "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your great name an ... [4]

**Commented [notes18]:** <sup>2</sup> For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ... [5]

**Commented [notes19]:** <sup>1</sup> If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high ab ... [6]

**Commented [notes20]:** <sup>15</sup> However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all ... [7]

**Commented [notes21]:** <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and grea ... [8]

**Commented [notes22]:** <sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" ... [9]

**Commented [notes23]:** <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woma ... [10]

of God was upon them. Jesus was demonstrating what the Father had long before declared. (Isaiah 5:1-7)

In the Spring, you can see the fruit buds on the bare fig trees swell. By early Summer it the fruit is ripening and the leaves come out. The leaders of Israel had all the showy leaves of religious formality. The Pharisees had raised religiosity to a new level. But there was no fruit. The religious system was spiritually impotent. In one generation it would be gone. The government and temple would be a thing of the past. But God always keeps for Himself a remnant. (2 Kings 19:31) In the early days of the church, it was entirely Jewish. Even today we are a church of Jew and Gentile made one in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:14-16) Increasingly Jews are finding Yeshua as their Messiah. The settlements of Israel where Jew and Palestinian have learned to live together in peace are those areas where both have discovered that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. There is the fruit of peace.

But lest we relegate this story to 2000 years ago in history, let us consider the fruitless fig and its implications for us. We can come to church, read our Bibles, give our tithes and offerings, pray before our meals, and yet be fruitless fig trees, all show and no go. (John 15:5) We can go through the actions that the most faithful among us perform, and yet be without spiritual life. The fruit forms first. But for those that display their leaves along the road to the temple, that promise fruit but have none, this parable is the warning of impending judgment. The same blessing or curse is over every life. We can do the Christian routines and not love God or our neighbor. God still curses religious profession expressed apart from spiritual reality.

The reason He does that is obvious. It is in the preceding passage. We are to be a place where the world can find the fruit to satisfy hunger. The hypocrite that waves his leaves of promise and attracts those passing by, leaves an impression of a lifeless, unloving god. They misrepresent the God who longs to enter into a relationship with the lost. This warning is for me more than for most of you. I am up here before you with a title and the respect of men. I have seen more than one leafy pastor dry up instantly. The curse of God is justice to those who misrepresent Him.

Mahatma Gandhi attended a church for a number of weeks in South Africa. He wrote, *"the congregation did not strike me as being particularly religious; they were not an assembly of devout souls, but appeared rather to be worldly-minded people going to Church for recreation and in conformity to custom."*—Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT) Gandhi's famous expression is that *"Christianity is wonderful. It is just that so few have tried it."* That church lost its chance to win this influential man because they were all leaves and no fruit. I would venture to say that church is no longer in existence. The fruitless tree has no successive generations. It is cursed and dries up. Uselessness invites abandonment and inevitable withering. (Revelation 2:5)

You might think it harsh but consider this, the leafy tree has insisted on living without the Spirit of God. It has insisted it will not die to self and be born again. It has insisted on living without the sap, and God says, "As you wish." It is just like the Children of Israel who, upon seeing the enemy in Canaan, declared, "We should have died in the wilderness." God said, "As you wish." It is not harsh; it is honoring the will of man.

**Commented [notes24]:** <sup>1</sup> I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. <sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. <sup>3</sup> "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? <sup>5</sup> Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. <sup>6</sup> I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it." <sup>7</sup> The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. Isaiah 5:1-7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** <sup>31</sup> For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. 2 Kings 19:31 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. Ephesians 2:14-16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** <sup>5</sup> Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. Revelation 2:5 (NIV)

When at Judgment Day man declares he would rather live without the King of kings, God says, "As you wish." They are banished from the presence of the Lord of life into eternal darkness. Fruitless figs have insisted on remaining free of the sap of life. Remember how Adam ran to the fig for leaves to hide his shame. (Genesis 3:7) Jesus, the second Adam, goes to the fig to look for fruit.

We find in Christ Jesus, in a personal relationship that permeates everything we do, a blessing of peace and joy. If we remain in Jesus, when He comes to check for fruit, He finds it in abundance. That fruit satisfies the hunger He has for us to know Him and the power of His resurrection. Is that what Jesus finds when He looks under the leaves of all our activities? Is it fruit or bareness? Leaves alone mean nothing. A church can be full of activity and be lifeless. (John 6:63) Programs may abound while fruit is never borne. We need to take heed to our corporate body as well as our own spiritual lives to see that we do not go down the path of the fruitless fig. If this church is without fruit, it will dry up and wither.

Last week I addressed one of the main ways in which we keep that relationship with our Lord fruitful, time in His presence. How did you do this week? Are you sincere about walking with Him? If this last week did not create a greater hunger in your life to hear from God I suggest you read again last week's sermon and take it to heart. It is so easy to fool ourselves with activity. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

<sup>20</sup>When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. Having worked with trees I can tell you it takes time for a tree to die. Even if you poison it, it can take a couple of weeks. The disciples were amazed. It was another opportunity for Jesus to reiterate a point He had taught them before, the lesson of the prayer of faith. (Matthew 17:20)

<sup>21</sup>Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. It is important for us to understand that Jesus is not telling us to have faith in faith, or faith in ourselves. That is the recipe for disappointment and bewilderment. We can understand this Scripture with other Scriptures. We know from the life of Jesus that He did not just pray for whatever He desired. He prayed the Father's will. You will often desire something that is not God's plan and yet it not sin. Jesus did in the Garden. (Luke 22:42) Paul did in regard to His affliction. God's answer to their prayer was not the easy way out, but grace to endure. (2 Corinthians 12:8-9) Because of these two obvious examples we can see that Jesus was not saying God is the great Santa Claus in the sky that will do anything you want. He was speaking to His disciples who were learning to obey the Father and to desire His will.

Jesus was not telling us to literally throw mountains into the sea. He did not do that. No one since has done that. It would create tsunamis and destroy life. But countless people have faced insurmountable obstacles and through the prayer of faith overcome. (James 5:16) They have been healed or received grace to endure. Their prayer was answered either way, just as powerfully and wonderfully as God answered the prayer of Jesus when He cursed the fig. As we learned before, it was a common rabbinical expression to say that a certain rabbi could move mountains. It meant that

**Commented [notes29]:** <sup>63</sup> The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. John 6:63 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** <sup>20</sup> He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." Matthew 17:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes32]:** <sup>42</sup> "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." Luke 22:42 (NIV)

**Commented [notes33]:** <sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 (NIV)

**Commented [notes34]:** <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16 (NIV)

he could use the Scriptures to overcome obstacles or confrontation, not that he could make God do whatever he desired. We are not trying to bend heaven's will to ours. Instead, we are learning to conform our will that which is in heaven.

John clearly tells us that if we ask anything according to God's will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14) And James warns that when we ask for our own desires, God graciously turns down our request. (James 4:3) When you know your request is God's will, have faith. It will be done. Do not give up. Believe, and it will be done.

<sup>22</sup>*If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.* " What a promise to those who unselfishly desire to see God's will done in the earth. In one prophetic gesture Jesus was declaring the end of the Jewish nation as they knew it and the beginning of a people of faith, both Jew and Gentile, who would pray God's will into the earth. This unselfish body of followers of Christ are told to ask and keep on asking, to seek and keep on seeking, to knock and keep on knocking, (Matthew 7:7) and God promises to answer.

Never be satisfied with leaves alone. We must bear fruit. Fruit only comes from a real relationship with Christ. It is not in works of any kind. It is not in keeping this rule or that. Listen to how the Apostle Paul put it. *4So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.* Romans 7:4 (NIV) It is a love relationship of intimacy. It is life transformed because it is buried with Him in baptism and raised to newness of life. (Romans 6:4) Why? *...that we might bear fruit to God.*

I am glad it was Jesus checking for fruit. He is the only licensed fruit inspector. Every week my fruit is inspected and I fail a number of the tests, but the only test that counts is the one the Lord Jesus gives. He sees fruit others do not. He is not impressed with all the leaves. He gets right down in there past all the leaves to see if there is any fruit that satisfies the hunger in His heart.

We can fool ourselves, but most of us know if we are walking with the Lord or just acting Christian. (Titus 1:16) We can tell because our workweek is focused on living for Him and bringing Him glory, or it is focused on self. That is not too hard to distinguish. Self-focus can manifest itself as religious activity. That is when we are most likely to fool ourselves, many nice leaves of ministry and religious activity, but no personal intimacy with Jesus. I am not your fruit inspector; that is Jesus' job. We are not to examine other's fruit. But you might want to get alone with Him and ask Him how the fruit is developing in your own life. He will let you know if you really want to know, and in the process He will invite you to a deeper walk with Him. It is a walk that results in rest for your soul. (Matthew 11:28-29) It is a walk that results in lasting fruit. (John 15:16)

If under all those leaves you do not see the peace and joy and love that are fruits of the Spirit, it is call to be born again in Jesus. It is an invitation to know Him as Lord of your life. Fruit comes from remaining in Him. Read John 15 and ask yourself if you are remaining in Him. Hear His invitation to a more intimate relationship with Him.

**Commented [notes35]:** <sup>14</sup> This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 1 John 5:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes36]:** <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. James 4:3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes37]:** <sup>7</sup> "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes38]:** <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes39]:** <sup>16</sup> They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. Titus 1:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes40]:** <sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28-29 (NIV)

**Commented [notes41]:** <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. John 15:16 (NIV)



**Page 2: [1] Commented [notes14] notes**

<sup>10</sup> These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt--completely useless! Jeremiah 13:10 (NIV)

**Page 2: [2] Commented [notes15] notes**

<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' <sup>8</sup> "Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'" Luke 13:6-9 (NIV)

**Page 2: [3] Commented [notes16] notes**

<sup>3</sup> So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Matthew 23:3-4 (NIV)

**Page 2: [4] Commented [notes17] notes**

<sup>32</sup> "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm--when he comes and prays toward this temple, <sup>33</sup> then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name. 2 Chronicles 6:32-33 (NIV)

**Page 2: [5] Commented [notes18] notes**

<sup>2</sup> For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Romans 10:2 (NIV)

**Page 2: [6] Commented [notes19] notes**

<sup>1</sup> If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. <sup>2</sup> All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: <sup>3</sup> You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. <sup>4</sup> The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock--the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. <sup>5</sup> Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. <sup>6</sup> You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. Deuteronomy 28:1-6 (NIV)

**Page 2: [7] Commented [notes20] notes**

<sup>15</sup> However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: <sup>16</sup> You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. <sup>17</sup> Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. <sup>18</sup> The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. <sup>19</sup> You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. Deuteronomy 28:15-19 (NIV)

**Page 2: [8] Commented [notes21] notes**

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."  
Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)

**Page 2: [9] Commented [notes22] notes**

<sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"  
Luke 10:36 (NIV)

**Page 2: [10] Commented [notes23] notes**

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)  
John 4:9 (NIV)