



JULY 26

GCC 2021 READING PLAN

Judges 9

Acts 13

Jeremiah 22

Mark 8

The Unsaved Christian 13

PRAY:

Father show us who you are. Show us your person, your power, your purposes. Overwhelm us with a knowledge of you that penetrates our minds and imbeds itself in the deepest recesses of our hearts. Let this knowledge so change our hearts that it results in our lives being lived in light of who you are, what you have done and what you say is true about us in Jesus Christ.

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AS YOU READ THROUGH TODAY'S PASSAGES REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS:

What are some things revealed in these passages about the person and character of God? Who is he? What is he like?

What are some things that God has done to reveal who he is?

Who are you in light of God's work? What is it that God is saying about you?

How should knowing who God is, what he has done and what he says about you change how you live?



Abimelech's Conspiracy

9 Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, ² "Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?' Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh."

³ And his mother's relatives spoke all these words on his behalf in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

⁴ And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows, who followed him. ⁵ And he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he hid himself. ⁶ And all the leaders of Shechem came together, and all Beth-millo, and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

⁷ When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim and cried aloud and said to them, "Listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to you. ⁸ The trees once went out to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' ⁹ But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, and go hold sway over the trees?' ¹⁰ And the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come and reign over us.' ¹¹ But the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go hold sway over the trees?' ¹² And the trees said to the vine, 'You come and reign over us.' ¹³ But the vine said to them, 'Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men and go hold sway over the trees?' ¹⁴ Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come and reign over us.' ¹⁵ And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade, but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

¹⁶ "Now therefore, if you acted in good faith and integrity when you made Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house and have done to him as his deeds deserved— ¹⁷ for my father fought for you and risked his life and delivered you from the hand of Midian, ¹⁸ and you have risen up against my father's house this day and have killed his sons, seventy men on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the leaders of Shechem, because he is your relative— ¹⁹ if you then have acted in good faith and integrity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. ²⁰ But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the leaders of Shechem and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem and from Beth-millo and devour Abimelech." ²¹ And Jotham ran away and fled and went to Beer and lived there, because of Abimelech his brother.

The Downfall of Abimelech

²² Abimelech ruled over Israel three years. ²³ And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, ²⁴ that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers. ²⁵ And the leaders of Shechem put men in ambush against him on the mountaintops, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way. And it was told to Abimelech.

²⁶ And Gaal the son of Ebed moved into Shechem with his relatives, and the leaders of Shechem put confidence in him. ²⁷ And they went out into the field and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them and held a festival; and they went into the house of their god and ate and drank and reviled Abimelech. ²⁸ And Gaal the son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech, and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him? ²⁹ Would that this people were under my hand! Then I would remove Abimelech. I would say to Abimelech, 'Increase your army, and come out.' "

³⁰ When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. ³¹ And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his relatives have come to Shechem, and they are stirring up the city against you. ³² Now therefore, go by night, you and the people who are with you, and set an ambush in the field. ³³ Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, rise early and rush upon the city. And when he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may do to them as your hand finds to do."

³⁴ So Abimelech and all the men who were with him rose up by night and set an ambush against Shechem in four companies. ³⁵ And Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city, and Abimelech and the people who were with him rose from the ambush. ³⁶ And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the mountaintops!" And Zebul said to him, "You mistake the shadow of the mountains for men." ³⁷ Gaal spoke again and said, "Look, people are coming down from the center of the land, and one company is coming from the direction of the Diviners' Oak." ³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your mouth now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' Are not these the people whom you despised? Go out now and fight with them." ³⁹ And Gaal went out at the head of the leaders of Shechem and fought with Abimelech. ⁴⁰ And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him. And many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate. ⁴¹ And Abimelech lived at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his relatives, so that they could not dwell at Shechem.

⁴² On the following day, the people went out into the field, and Abimelech was told. ⁴³ He took his people and divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. And he looked and saw the people coming out of the city. So he rose against them and killed them. ⁴⁴ Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of

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the gate of the city, while the two companies rushed upon all who were in the field and killed them. ⁴⁵ And Abimelech fought against the city all that day. He captured the city and killed the people who were in it, and he razed the city and sowed it with salt.

⁴⁶ When all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of El-berith. ⁴⁷ Abimelech was told that all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem were gathered together. ⁴⁸ And Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. And Abimelech took an axe in his hand and cut down a bundle of brushwood and took it up and laid it on his shoulder. And he said to the men who were with him, "What you have seen me do, hurry and do as I have done." ⁴⁹ So every one of the people cut down his bundle and following Abimelech put it against the stronghold, and they set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the people of the Tower of Shechem also died, about 1,000 men and women.

⁵⁰ Then Abimelech went to Thebez and encamped against Thebez and captured it. ⁵¹ But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the men and women and all the leaders of the city fled to it and shut themselves in, and they went up to the roof of the tower. ⁵² And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. ⁵³ And a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. ⁵⁴ Then he called quickly to the young man his armor-bearer and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest they say of me, 'A woman killed him.' " And his young man thrust him through, and he died. ⁵⁵ And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, everyone departed to his home. ⁵⁶ Thus God returned the evil of Abimelech, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷ And God also made all the evil of the men of Shechem return on their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

ACTS 13

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

13 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Barnabas and Saul on Cyprus

⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the

synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. ⁶ When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. ⁷ He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹ But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? ¹¹ And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹² Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia

¹³ Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, ¹⁴ but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it." ¹⁶ So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

"Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸ And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. ²⁰ All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²² And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' ²³ Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴ Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶ "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. ²⁷ For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸ And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. ³² And we bring

you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,

“ ‘You are my Son,
today I have begotten you.’

³⁴ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“ ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“ ‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

³⁶ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷ but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.

³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

⁴¹ “ ‘Look, you scoffers,

be astounded and perish;

for I am doing a work in your days,

a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.’ ”

⁴² As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

“ ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”

⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

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JEREMIAH 22

22 Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, ² and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates. ³ Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. ⁴ For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people. ⁵ But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation. ⁶ For thus says the LORD concerning the house of the king of Judah:

" 'You are like Gilead to me,
like the summit of Lebanon,
yet surely I will make you a desert,
an uninhabited city.

⁷ I will prepare destroyers against you,
each with his weapons,
and they shall cut down your choicest cedars
and cast them into the fire.

⁸ " 'And many nations will pass by this city, and every man will say to his neighbor, "Why has the LORD dealt thus with this great city?" ⁹ And they will answer, "Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and worshiped other gods and served them." ' "

¹⁰ Weep not for him who is dead,

nor grieve for him,
but weep bitterly for him who goes away,
for he shall return no more
to see his native land.

Message to the Sons of Josiah

¹¹ For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went away from this place: "He shall return here no more, ¹² but in the place where they have carried him captive, there shall he die, and he shall never see this land again."

¹³ "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,
and his upper rooms by injustice,
who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing
and does not give him his wages,

¹⁴ who says, 'I will build myself a great house
with spacious upper rooms,'
who cuts out windows for it,
paneling it with cedar
and painting it with vermilion.

¹⁵ Do you think you are a king
because you compete in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink
and do justice and righteousness?
Then it was well with him.

¹⁶ He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
then it was well.
Is not this to know me?

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declares the LORD.

17 But you have eyes and heart

only for your dishonest gain,

for shedding innocent blood,

and for practicing oppression and violence.”

18 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

“They shall not lament for him, saying,

‘Ah, my brother!’ or ‘Ah, sister!’

They shall not lament for him, saying,

‘Ah, lord!’ or ‘Ah, his majesty!’

19 With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried,

dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”

20 “Go up to Lebanon, and cry out,

and lift up your voice in Bashan;

cry out from Abarim,

for all your lovers are destroyed.

21 I spoke to you in your prosperity,

but you said, ‘I will not listen.’

This has been your way from your youth,

that you have not obeyed my voice.

22 The wind shall shepherd all your shepherds,

and your lovers shall go into captivity;

then you will be ashamed and confounded

because of all your evil.

23 O inhabitant of Lebanon,

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nested among the cedars,
how you will be pitied when pangs come upon you,
pain as of a woman in labor!”

²⁴ “As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off ²⁵ and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. ²⁶ I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. ²⁷ But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return.”

²⁸ Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot,
a vessel no one cares for?
Why are he and his children hurled and cast
into a land that they do not know?

²⁹ O land, land, land,
hear the word of the LORD!

³⁰ Thus says the LORD:
“Write this man down as childless,
a man who shall not succeed in his days,
for none of his offspring shall succeed
in sitting on the throne of David
and ruling again in Judah.”

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MARK 8

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

8 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, ² “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. ³ And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.” ⁴ And

his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?" ⁵ And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." ⁶ And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. ⁷ And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. ⁸ And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ⁹ And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. ¹⁰ And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Demand a Sign

¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." ¹³ And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

¹⁴ Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." ¹⁶ And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. ¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." ²⁰ "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." ²¹ And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

²² And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

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THE UNSAVED CHRISTIAN BY DEAN INSERRA

Finish Chapter 13 of The Unsaved Christian. Work through the discussion questions at the end of the chapter.



JOURNAL A PRAYER TO THE LORD FROM YOUR READING TODAY.