

## Week 17: “Our God Who Reveals Himself”

### Wk 17 - Day 1: Genesis 17

**Explanation:** Genesis 17 opens with Abram ninety-nine years old and still waiting for the promised son. God appears and identifies Himself as “the Almighty God”—El Shaddai. This name emphasizes God’s unlimited power and complete sufficiency. Abraham and Sarah lacked the natural ability to fulfill the promise, but God’s plan never depended upon their ability. It depended upon His. God commands Abram, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect.” The Hebrew word translated “perfect,” means whole, complete, or wholehearted. God was not demanding sinless perfection; He was calling Abram to live with undivided devotion.

God then changes Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah. In Bible history, a new name means a new beginning, a step forward in faith. Their new names reflect identities shaped by God’s promise rather than their present circumstances. Circumcision becomes the visible sign of the covenant, marking Abraham’s family as belonging to God. Abraham laughs at the thought of Sarah bearing a son and asks God to fulfill the promise through Ishmael. God promises to bless Ishmael, but the covenant will come through Isaac. God would not accomplish His purpose through Abraham’s substitute, but through His own promised provision.

**Application:** We often judge God’s promises by our limitations. When time passes, circumstances worsen, or our strength runs out, we may assume God’s purpose has failed. Genesis 17 redirects our attention from what we can do to who God is. What is impossible for us remains completely possible for El Shaddai. As far as the record is concerned, God waited thirteen years before He revealed himself again to Abraham. During those quiet intervening years, Abraham continued to walk with God and serve Him. He did not need constant special revelations to do God’s will, nor do we.

God’s power should also produce wholehearted obedience. We cannot claim to trust Him while keeping certain areas of life outside His authority. Faith means walking closely with God, obeying what He has said, and surrendering our attempts to manufacture an easier solution. Like Abraham, we may ask God to bless our substitute instead of waiting for His promise. This chapter challenges us to release our preferred plans and trust God’s wisdom, timing, and power.

- *Why do you think God waited until Abram was ninety-nine to reveal Himself as El Shaddai?*
- *How can waiting reveal what we truly believe about God?*
- *Where are you most tempted to divide your loyalty between God and something else?*
- *What part of your life currently feels beyond your ability to control or repair?*

### Wk 17 - Day 2: Matthew 17

**Explanation:** Matthew 17 begins with the Transfiguration. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain, where His face shines like the sun and His clothing becomes white as light. The Greek word translated “transfigured,” means to be changed in outward appearance. Jesus did not become divine on the mountain. His divine glory, normally veiled by His humanity, was briefly revealed. Moses and Elijah appear with Him. Moses represented the Law, while Elijah represented the prophets. Together, they show that the Old Testament Scriptures point toward and find their fulfillment in Christ. Peter suggests building three tabernacles, placing Jesus alongside Moses and Elijah, but the Father interrupts him: “This is my beloved Son...hear ye him.” Jesus is not simply another prophet or spiritual teacher. Moses and Elijah were servants; Jesus is the Son of God. The Father’s command to “hear” Him means more than merely listening to His words. It means receiving His authority and responding with obedience. After coming down the mountain, Jesus delivers a suffering boy whom the disciples had been unable to help. The One whose glory was revealed on the mountain is also present in the pain of the valley. Jesus then predicts His death and resurrection, reminding the disciples that His glory would ultimately be revealed through the cross.

**Application:** The Transfiguration challenges our view of Jesus. He is more than a source of encouragement, moral example, or helpful teacher. He is the glorious Son of God, worthy of our worship, trust, and complete obedience. The Father’s words, “hear ye him,” are especially important in a world filled with competing voices. Culture, emotion, fear, social media, and personal opinion all attempt to shape our thinking. Listening to Jesus means allowing His truth to correct our assumptions and direct our decisions. God also gives mountaintop moments to prepare us for life in the valley. Spiritual experiences are not meant to help us escape the needs around us. A clearer vision of Christ should give us greater faith to follow Him into difficult places.

- *What voices compete most strongly with the words of Jesus in your daily life?*
- *Describe a “mountaintop” experience that helped prepare you for a difficult valley.*
- *Imagine you were one of the three disciples. What question would you have wanted to ask Jesus after coming down the mountain?*
- *How might your response to fear change if you pictured the glorious Christ standing beside you?*

# OUR MIGHTY God

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## Wk 17 - Day 3: Nehemiah 7

**Explanation:** The wall of Jerusalem has been completed, but Nehemiah understands that construction alone cannot restore a city. Jerusalem must now be guarded, organized, populated, and centered upon worship. He appoints gatekeepers, singers, and Levites, showing that protection, worship, and service are all necessary for the health of God's people. Nehemiah places Hanani and Hananiah in leadership. Hananiah is described as "a faithful man" who "feared God above many." Nehemiah does not choose a leader merely because he is talented or impressive. He looks for someone whose character has been shaped by devotion to God.

The gates are to be opened and closed carefully, and the people are assigned places to guard. The wall had been rebuilt through sacrifice, but it could still be endangered through carelessness. What God had restored now had to be faithfully protected. God then puts it into Nehemiah's heart to gather the people according to their genealogies. The long list of names records families God preserved through exile and returned to Jerusalem. Every name represents a life, a family, and another testimony that God had not forgotten His covenant people.

**Application:** Spiritual progress must be guarded. A habit can be established, a relationship restored, or a ministry built, yet neglect can slowly undo what obedience accomplished. We should carefully consider what we allow through the "gates" of our minds, hearts, homes, and churches. Nehemiah's choice of leaders also reminds us that God values character above charisma. Talent may attract attention, but faithfulness and reverence for God make a person trustworthy. Before asking how gifted we are, we should ask whether we can be depended upon to obey God when no one is watching. The genealogy teaches us that no faithful life is insignificant. God knows every name and sees every act of service. Quiet obedience, faithful parenting, hidden prayer, generous giving, and unnoticed ministry may become part of a spiritual heritage that blesses people long after we are gone.

- *What is something God has helped you build that now needs to be carefully guarded?*
- *What influences are most likely to enter through the "gates" of your mind and heart?*
- *What quiet act of faithfulness from someone in an earlier generation has benefited your life?*
- *What spiritual legacy are you intentionally building for those who will come after you?*

## Wk 17 - Day 4: Acts 17

**Explanation:** Acts 17 follows Paul through Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. In Thessalonica, Paul "reasoned" with the people from the Scriptures. The word "reasoned" describes thoughtful discussion, explanation, or dialogue. Paul did not rely only on emotion or personal experience. He carefully showed from Scripture that the promised Christ had to suffer, rise from the dead, and that Jesus is that Christ. Some believe, while others respond with jealousy and opposition.

Paul and Silas then travel to Berea, where the people receive the message eagerly and search the Scriptures daily to determine whether it is true. Their response combines openness with discernment. They are willing to listen, but they test everything by God's Word. When Paul reaches Athens, he is grieved by a city filled with idols. He notices an altar inscribed "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD" and uses it as a starting point to proclaim the true God. God is the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth. He does not live in temples made by human hands, nor does He depend upon people to meet His needs. Instead, He gives everyone life, breath, and all things. Paul explains that God sovereignly orders human history so that people might seek Him. Yet God is no longer to be treated as unknown. He has revealed Himself decisively through Jesus and confirmed this revelation by raising Him from the dead. Some mock, some want to hear more, and others believe.

**Application:** Our culture can be very spiritual while still being confused about who God is. Paul described the people as "Ignorantly worshipping." People may believe in a higher power but shape their idea of God around personal preferences. Often times we may find ourselves tempted to worship our own plans, dreams, security, or comfort. Acts 17 reminds us that God is not ours to invent. He is the Creator who has revealed Himself through Scripture and ultimately through Jesus. The Bereans show us how to respond to teaching. We should listen eagerly while examining everything carefully. Confidence, popularity, emotional presentation, or a large platform does not make a message true. Scripture remains the standard. Paul's example also teaches us how to share our faith. He observes the people around him, understands their questions, and begins with something familiar. Yet he does not avoid difficult truths. He leads them toward the Creator, repentance, resurrection, and Christ. We should speak with both understanding and conviction.

- *In what ways do people create a god who reflects their preferences rather than Scripture?*
- *What are some modern idols that do not look religious but still receive worship?*
- *Imagine Paul visited your community. What local object, slogan, trend, or concern might he use to begin a gospel conversation?*
- *Who in your life may be spiritually curious, and what question could you ask to begin a meaningful conversation?*

# OUR MIGHTY

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God

## Wk 17 - Day 5: Psalm 19

**Explanation:** Psalm 19 describes two ways God reveals Himself: through His world and through His Word. The psalm begins, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” The Hebrew word translated “declare,” saphar, means to recount, announce, or tell. Creation continually tells the story of its Creator through its order, beauty, power, and design.

The heavens have no audible voice, yet their testimony reaches every nation. Day after day and night after night, creation continues to reveal God’s wisdom and greatness. David specifically describes the sun moving across the sky like a joyful bridegroom or a strong runner completing his course.

Beginning in verse 7, David turns from creation to Scripture. He describes God’s Word as His law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgments. The Hebrew word “law,” torah, means instruction or direction, not merely a list of rules. God’s Word restores the soul, gives wisdom, rejoices the heart, and enlightens the eyes.

David values Scripture more than gold and finds it sweeter than honey. God’s Word not only teaches him; it exposes him. He ends by asking God to cleanse his hidden faults, restrain him from deliberate sin, and make both his words and inward thoughts acceptable.

**Application:** Creation invites us to slow down and recover a sense of wonder. We can live beneath skies that declare God’s glory while being too distracted to notice Him. Paying attention to the world God made should produce worship, humility, and gratitude. But creation does not reveal everything we need to know. God has given us His Word to reveal His character, expose our sin, direct our choices, and restore our souls. Scripture should be more than information we occasionally read. It should be treasured, trusted, and obeyed.

David’s final prayer reminds us that seeing God more clearly should lead us to examine ourselves more honestly. We need God to address not only our visible actions but also our hidden motives, private thoughts, and unnoticed patterns. True revelation should always lead to transformation.

- *What part of creation most consistently causes you to think about God?*
- *Which description of God’s Word in verses 7–9 is most meaningful to you, and why?*
- *Why is God’s Word more valuable than gold and sweeter than honey?*
- *How would your habits change if you genuinely viewed God’s Word as your greatest treasure?*



## Week 18: "Our God Of Certain Hope"

### Wk 18 - Day 1: Genesis 18

**Explanation:** Genesis 18 begins with the Lord appearing to Abraham near the trees of Mamre. Abraham welcomes three visitors and offers them generous hospitality. During the meal, the Lord repeats the promise that Sarah will have a son. This time, Sarah hears the promise from inside the tent and laughs because both she and Abraham are old. Her laughter reveals the struggle between God's promise and what she believed was naturally possible. The Lord responds with a searching question: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" God was not asking whether the promise was difficult for Abraham and Sarah. He was asking whether anything could be beyond His power.

The chapter then shifts from promise to judgment. God reveals to Abraham what is coming upon Sodom. Abraham responds by interceding for the city, asking whether God will spare it for the sake of the righteous. His prayer is bold yet humble. He appeals to the character of God, asking, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" This conversation reveals that God is both perfectly just and abundantly merciful. He does not judge carelessly or without knowledge. He sees the full condition of the cities, listens to Abraham's intercession, and demonstrates His willingness to show mercy. God's revelation gives Abraham hope concerning his own promise, but it also moves him to pray for people facing judgment.

**Application:** Certain hope does not require us to deny reality. Abraham and Sarah truly were old, and the promise truly appeared impossible. Faith is not pretending the obstacle is small; it is believing that God is greater. We may laugh inwardly at what God has promised because we cannot imagine how He could accomplish it. We calculate according to resources, timing, age, experience, or human probability. Genesis 18 reminds us that God's promises are not limited by the conditions surrounding us. The phrase "at the time appointed" also challenges our impatience. God's delays are not necessarily denials. We may feel that nothing is happening, but God is never confused about the timing of His purposes. Hope waits because it trusts not only what God has promised but also when He chooses to fulfill it. Abraham's intercession challenges us to let hope turn us outward. People who believe God is merciful should pray for those who desperately need His mercy. The God who gives us hope also calls us to carry the needs of others before Him.

- *What situation in your life currently seems "too hard" or beyond human ability?*
- *Why is it encouraging that God did not cancel His promise after Sarah doubted and denied laughing?*
- *Abraham moved from receiving a promise to interceding for Sodom. How should personal hope make us more concerned for others?*
- *What is one promise from Scripture that you need to place above your present circumstances?*

### Wk 18 - Day 2: Matthew 18

**Explanation:** Matthew 18 begins with the disciples asking who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus places a child among them and teaches that entrance into His kingdom requires humility. Children held little social status in that culture, so Jesus uses the child to confront the disciples' desire for position and recognition. Jesus repeatedly speaks about His "little ones." The phrase refers not only to children but also to humble and vulnerable believers who depend upon Him. He warns against causing them to stumble. The Greek word means to place a trap or obstacle in someone's path. Jesus takes seriously any influence that pulls another person toward sin or away from faith. He then tells the parable of the wandering sheep. The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to seek the one that has gone astray. The word translated "gone astray," means to wander, be deceived, or lose one's way. The shepherd does not celebrate the sheep's wandering, but neither does he abandon it. God's heart is set upon restoration. Jesus continues by explaining how believers should respond when someone sins against them. The goal is not humiliation, gossip, or punishment, but repentance and restored fellowship. Even church discipline is meant to pursue truth and restoration. The chapter ends with Peter asking how often he must forgive. Jesus answers "seventy times seven," pointing to forgiveness without a calculated limit. The parable of the unforgiving servant reminds us that those who have received immeasurable mercy must extend mercy to others.

**Application:** This passage confirms that just about everything in Jesus' kingdom is upside down. Or rather, it's right side up but appears upside down to a world that has its priorities backwards. This chapter offers hope to the wandering, the wounded, and those who have failed. Jesus does not treat people as disposable. He seeks the wandering, protects the vulnerable, confronts sin, and makes restoration possible. This chapter also challenges the way we pursue greatness. The world associates greatness with influence, recognition, and control. Jesus connects greatness with humility, dependence, care for the overlooked, and willingness to forgive. We also learn that forgiveness does not mean pretending sin did not matter. Jesus provides a clear process for addressing wrongdoing honestly. Biblical restoration requires both grace and truth. We should not ignore sin, but neither should we use another person's failure as an opportunity for revenge. Our hope for forgiveness rests in the mercy we have received from Christ. Remembering the size of our forgiven debt should soften our hearts toward those who have sinned against us.

- *How does the shepherd's pursuit of one wandering sheep reveal the heart of God?*
- *Why is it sometimes easier to discuss another person's sin with others than to speak directly to that person?*
- *How can a church practice both accountability and compassion?*
- *How does remembering your own forgiven debt affect your willingness to forgive someone else? most?*

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## Wk 18 - Day 3: Nehemiah 8

**Explanation:** Nehemiah 8 marks a turning point in the restoration of Jerusalem. The wall has been rebuilt, but God now begins rebuilding the people spiritually. They gather together and ask Ezra to bring the Book of the Law. Their request reveals a renewed hunger to hear from God. Ezra reads the Scriptures from morning until midday, and the people listen attentively. When he blesses the Lord, they respond, "Amen, Amen," lift their hands, bow their heads, and worship. Their physical response reflects reverence for the God who had spoken. The Levites help the people understand what is being read. The goal was not simply to hear words but to understand their meaning and respond properly. As the people understand the Law, they begin to weep. God's Word exposes how far they have wandered from God. They are instructed to celebrate, share food with those who have nothing prepared, and remember that "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Their strength would not come from pretending they had not failed. It would come from finding refuge in the gracious God who had restored them and spoken to them again.

**Application:** God's Word produces both conviction and hope. It reveals sin honestly, but it does not leave repentant people without grace. The people wept because they understood how they had disobeyed, yet they were also called to rejoice because God had not abandoned them. We sometimes confuse spiritual maturity with constant heaviness. Conviction is necessary, but sorrow is meant to lead us toward repentance, restoration, and renewed joy. The goal is not to remain ashamed but to return to God. "The joy of the Lord" is deeper than temporary happiness. It is the settled assurance that God is faithful, His mercy is available, and His people still belong to Him. That joy becomes a stronghold when circumstances are unstable. When we cannot see what He is doing now, we can look back at what He has already done. Remembering His faithfulness yesterday gives us certain hope for tomorrow.

- *Why is understanding Scripture more important than simply hearing or completing a reading?*
- *What is the difference between conviction that leads to repentance and shame that leaves us feeling hopeless?*
- *How can the joy of the Lord become a stronghold in a difficult season?*
- *How does remembering God's faithfulness in the past strengthen our hope for the future?*

## Wk 18 - Day 4: Acts 18

**Explanation:** Acts 18 finds Paul arriving in Corinth after experiencing rejection and opposition in other cities. Corinth was wealthy, influential, and known for widespread immorality. From a human perspective, it may not have seemed like a promising place for the gospel. Paul works alongside Aquila and Priscilla as a tentmaker while reasoning from Scripture each Sabbath. Some believe, including Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, but others strongly oppose Paul's message.

During the night, the Lord tells Paul, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace." This message suggests that Paul was already struggling with fear showing that even a faithful servant like Paul needed God to renew his courage and hope. God gives Paul several reasons to continue. He tells him, "I am with thee," meaning that God was presently working and the opposition could not stop His purpose. He also tells him that he had "much people in this city." Paul saw resistance and spiritual darkness, but God already saw the people who would believe. His hope rested not in visible results but in God's presence and unseen purpose. Paul remains in Corinth for eighteen months, faithfully teaching God's Word. The chapter later introduces Apollos, whose understanding is strengthened by Aquila and Priscilla. Together, their stories show that God was working through many people to advance His mission.

**Application:** Certain hope does not mean we never feel afraid or discouraged. Paul needed God to tell him not to fear. The presence of fear does not necessarily mean we lack faith; it may mean we have reached a place where we must deliberately trust what God has said.

God did not remove every difficult person or challenging circumstance from Corinth. Instead, He gave Paul something stronger than easy circumstances; His presence, protection, and purpose. Our confidence is not that obedience will always be comfortable. It is that God will be with us and accomplish what He intends. We often judge the future by what we can presently see. Paul saw opposition, but God saw "much people." We may see little progress, limited results, or closed hearts while God is already preparing fruit we cannot yet recognize. Sometimes the brave thing God is asking us to do is go. But sometimes the bravest thing, the hardest thing, the most heroic and faithful thing, is to stay. This chapter encourages us not to give up too quickly. Certain hope keeps speaking, serving, praying, and obeying because God is still working. The outcome does not depend entirely upon us. We are responsible to remain faithful, while God is responsible for producing the harvest.

- *Why is it encouraging to know that a faithful person like Paul still needed reassurance from God?*
- *Where might you be judging the future only by what you can presently see?*
- *Why do people sometimes give up when visible results do not appear quickly?*
- *What do Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos teach us about the importance of encouragement, correction, and teachability?*

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## Wk 18 - Day 5: Psalm 130

**Explanation:** Psalm 130 begins with a cry “out of the depths.” The Hebrew word describes deep places, often picturing overwhelming trouble, guilt, sorrow, or helplessness. The psalmist does not approach God from a place of strength. He calls upon Him from a place where he cannot rescue himself. The psalmist recognizes that if God kept a strict record of sins, no one could stand before Him. Yet he immediately declares, “But there is forgiveness with thee.” His hope is not based upon innocence but upon God’s mercy. Forgiveness does not make God less worthy of reverence; it produces deeper worship and gratitude. The writer then says, “I wait for the Lord,” which can carry the picture of tension, like a cord pulled tightly while awaiting release. This is not passive indifference. The psalmist actively waits because his hope rests in God’s Word. He compares his longing to watchmen waiting for the morning. A watchman could not cause the sun to rise, but he could be certain that morning would come. In the same way, believers cannot control God’s timing, but they can trust His faithfulness. The psalm ends by calling all Israel to hope in the Lord because with Him there is steadfast love and “plenteous redemption.” God does not offer a small or reluctant rescue. He possesses abundant mercy and is able to redeem His people completely.

**Application:** Psalm 130 gives us permission to speak honestly from the depths of our struggles. Certain hope does not mean we never feel sorrow, guilt, or desperation. It means those emotions do not have the final word. Our confidence rests in the truth that God forgives. We do not have to hide our sin, minimize it, or attempt to earn our way back into His favor. We can confess it and trust His abundant redemption. Waiting can feel like inactivity, but Biblical waiting is an expression of faith. Like watchmen waiting for morning, we continue praying, obeying, and watching because we trust that God will be faithful even when we cannot predict the moment of His answer. Hope becomes certain when it rests in God’s Word rather than our preferred schedule. We may not know when the morning will appear, but we know darkness will not last forever.

- *What kinds of experiences can make a person feel as though they are crying “out of the depths”?*
- *How does the picture of a watchman waiting for morning help explain biblical hope?*
- *What do people commonly place their hope in instead of God’s Word and promises?*
- *What might faithful waiting look like in a situation where you cannot control the timing or outcome?*



## Week 19: “Our God Who Saves”

### Wk 19 - Day 1: Genesis 19

**Explanation:** Genesis 19 opens with two angels arriving in Sodom, where Lot welcomes them into his home. The city’s corruption is quickly exposed when a violent crowd surrounds the house. God’s judgment upon Sodom was not impulsive or uninformed; its wickedness had become deeply rooted and openly destructive. The angels warn Lot that the city will be destroyed and instruct him to gather his family and leave. Yet Lot’s sons-in-law treat the warning as though he were joking. When morning comes, Lot still lingers. Even after receiving a clear warning, Lot struggles to separate himself from the place he has chosen to call home. Because of God’s mercy, the angels take Lot, his wife, and his daughters by the hand and lead them outside the city. Their rescue depends more upon God’s compassion than Lot’s urgency. They are told to escape without looking back, but Lot’s wife turns toward Sodom and is judged. Her backward look reveals more than curiosity; it shows that part of her heart remained attached to the life God was calling her to leave.

The chapter ends with the tragic consequences of Lot’s compromised choices. Though God rescued him from the destruction of Sodom, the influence of Sodom continued to affect his family. Physical escape did not automatically produce spiritual transformation.

**Application:** Genesis 19 reveals that our God saves, but His rescue must be taken seriously. God’s warnings are expressions of mercy. When He exposes sin or calls us to leave something behind, hesitation can keep us dangerously close to what is destroying us.

Like Lot, we may linger because we have become comfortable with unhealthy influences, relationships, habits, or environments. Yet God sometimes saves us by pulling us away from what we would not willingly leave on our own. His mercy may feel disruptive, but it is leading us toward life. This chapter also warns us against looking back with longing. We sometimes must ask ourselves, “How often am I tempted to value this temporary life with its momentary comforts and fleeting security more than I long for the life ahead of me with Christ?” God does not save us so that we can continue admiring the life from which He rescued us. True deliverance includes allowing Him to change our desires, not merely our location. Our hope is that God is more committed to saving than we are capable of saving ourselves. We should respond to His mercy with urgency, gratitude, and a willingness to leave behind whatever keeps drawing us toward destruction.

- What does the condition of Sodom reveal about the seriousness and destructive nature of sin?
- Why do you think Lot’s sons-in-law treated God’s warning as a joke?
- What does Lot’s lingering reveal about the pull Sodom still had upon his heart?
- Where might God currently be telling you to stop lingering and begin obeying?

### Wk 19 - Day 2: Matthew 19

**Explanation:** Matthew 19 contains several conversations that reveal both humanity’s need for salvation and our inability to obtain it through our own goodness. Jesus first teaches about marriage and welcomes children whom the disciples attempt to turn away. He declares that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who receive it with childlike humility and dependence. Salvation cannot be approached through pride, status, or personal achievement. A rich young ruler then asks Jesus, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” His question reveals his assumption that salvation can be earned through personal accomplishment. Jesus exposes his deepest attachment by telling him to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him. The issue was not simply that the man owned wealth; rather that wealth owned his heart. The man walks away sorrowful because he is unwilling to surrender what he values most. Jesus tells His disciples that it is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom, causing them to ask, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus responds, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Salvation cannot be produced through morality, wealth, religious effort, or human determination. It is a work only God can accomplish.

**Application:** Matthew 19 confronts the idea that we can save ourselves. We may compare ourselves favorably with others, depend upon religious activity, or believe our good behavior has earned God’s acceptance. But Jesus teaches that salvation is impossible through human effort. The rich young ruler appeared moral, sincere, and spiritually interested, yet he would not surrender control. His story asks us what we are trusting besides Christ. Anything we refuse to release may reveal where our true confidence lies. The good news of this chapter is that while salvation is impossible for us to achieve in and of ourselves, with God it is possible. What we could never accomplish through effort, He makes possible through grace. We come to Him like children: humbly, dependently, and empty-handed. Because salvation is God’s work, we have no reason to boast and no reason to despair. No one is good enough to earn it, but no one is beyond the power of God to rescue.

- What does Jesus’ welcome of the children teach us about entering God’s kingdom?
- What is the difference between owning something and allowing it to own you?
- What forms of morality or religious activity might people depend upon instead of God’s grace?
- Complete the sentence: “I cannot save myself through \_\_\_\_\_, but God can save me through \_\_\_\_\_.”

# OUR MIGHTY God

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## Wk 19 - Day 3: Nehemiah 9

**Explanation:** Nehemiah 9 records a national prayer of confession. After hearing God's Word, the people gather with fasting, sackcloth, and humility. For part of the day, Scripture is read; for another part, they confess their sins and worship the Lord.

Their prayer begins not with their failure but with God's greatness. He alone is Lord, Creator, covenant-maker, and the One who chose Abraham. The people then retell Israel's history—from Egypt and the Red Sea to the wilderness, the Promised Land, the judges, and the exile. A repeated pattern emerges: God saves, the people rebel, consequences follow, they cry out, and God shows mercy again. The prayer says that God heard them from heaven and, according to His "manifold mercies," provided deliverers. The Hebrew idea behind mercies, describes deep compassion and tender care. Israel's history should have been defined by its repeated rebellion. Instead, it is also defined by God's repeated rescue. He did not excuse their sin, but neither did He abandon His covenant. Even when they were disobedient, He continued to warn, correct, provide, and preserve them. The people finally acknowledge their present distress and confess that God has acted faithfully while they have acted wickedly. Remembering God's saving work leads them to repentance and renewed commitment.

**Application:** Nehemiah 9 teaches us to remember our story honestly. We should neither minimize our sin nor overlook God's mercy. The more clearly we recognize how often we have wandered, the more amazed we should become by the God who repeatedly saves. Our failures may seem repetitive, but God's mercy is not quickly exhausted. This does not give us permission to continue in sin. Instead, His compassion should lead us toward confession, gratitude, and change. The chapter also shows the importance of remembering. When we forget what God has done, we become proud, fearful, and spiritually careless. Recalling His past rescues gives us hope that He is still able to save in our present need. Our God saves not because we have been consistently faithful, but because He is abundantly merciful. We can confess our sin honestly because our hope rests in His character rather than our record.

- *Why is remembering our failures important without allowing them to define us completely?*
- *Why do people tend to forget God after He has delivered or blessed them?*
- *What past rescue from God gives you confidence to trust Him today?*
- *How can a church regularly remember God's faithfulness without becoming trapped in the past? effective—and is it already happening?*

## Wk 19 - Day 4: Acts 19

**Explanation:** Acts 19 describes the powerful spread of the gospel in Ephesus, a city strongly associated with idolatry, magic, and the worship of the goddess Diana, also known as Artemis. Paul meets several disciples who know only the baptism of John. After hearing the full message about Jesus, they believe, are baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit. Their experience shows that sincere religious knowledge is not enough; people need the saving truth of Christ. Paul teaches publicly and then daily in the school of Tyrannus. Over two years, the message spreads throughout the region. God also performs extraordinary miracles through Paul, demonstrating Christ's authority over sickness and spiritual darkness. The sons of Sceva attempt to use Jesus' name as though it were a magical formula. Because they do not personally know Christ, their attempt ends in humiliation and defeat. The incident produces holy fear, and many believers openly confess their former practices. Those involved in magic bring their books together and burn them publicly. These materials are extremely valuable, but genuine repentance is more valuable than preserving what had kept them in bondage. The chapter declares, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The gospel does not merely compete with darkness; it overcomes it. The transformation threatens the business of craftsmen who profit from idolatry. Their violent reaction reveals that salvation changes more than private beliefs—it challenges the systems, habits, and loyalties built around false worship.

**Application:** Acts 19 reminds us that our God saves people from real spiritual bondage. The gospel is not simply advice for becoming better behaved. It delivers people from false worship, destructive practices, spiritual darkness, and powers they cannot defeat themselves. The burning of the books shows that salvation produces visible change. We cannot claim freedom in Christ while continuing to preserve easy access to what once controlled us. Repentance may be costly, but bondage always costs more. The sons of Sceva warn us that the name of Jesus is not a formula to use without a relationship with Him. Saving power is found not in religious language but in knowing and belonging to Christ. We should also expect the gospel to challenge modern idols. Anything that controls our desires, receives our devotion, or promises what only God can provide must surrender to the authority of Jesus. Our God does not merely save us from judgment; He breaks the power of what once enslaved us.

- *What is the difference between knowing religious language and personally knowing Christ?*
- *Why was the public burning of the magic books an important expression of repentance?*
- *What modern industries, habits, or systems might be threatened if people genuinely followed Jesus?*



# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 19 - Day 5: Psalm 18

**Explanation:** Psalm 18 is David's song of praise after God delivered him from his enemies and from Saul. Rather than beginning with the details of his trouble, David begins with his devotion: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." He describes God as his rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, stronghold, and refuge. The Hebrew word translated "deliverer," carries the idea of bringing someone into safety or helping them escape danger. Each image emphasizes stability, protection, and security beyond David's own ability. David remembers crying to God when he felt surrounded by death and overwhelmed by distress. His rescue is described with dramatic images of the earth shaking, heavens bowing, thunder sounding, and God reaching down from above. The poetic language pictures the Lord as a mighty King personally moving to rescue His servant. David says that God brought him into "a large place." The image contrasts the tight, suffocating pressure of danger with the freedom and safety God provided. His salvation was not accidental; David declares that God delivered him because He delighted in him. The psalm later praises God for strengthening David for battle and giving him victory. David fought, but his strength, protection, and success came from the Lord. He ends by worshiping the living God who shows steadfast mercy to His anointed.

**Application:** Psalm 18 gives us a vocabulary for trusting our God who saves. When life feels unstable, He is our rock. When we feel exposed, He is our fortress. When we are trapped, He is our deliverer. When we are weak, He is our strength. David did not merely think about God's ability to save; he called upon Him. Knowing that God is a refuge should move us to run to Him in prayer rather than depending only upon ourselves. God's rescue does not always remove every battle immediately. Sometimes He saves us from the danger, and other times He strengthens us to walk through it. In both cases, our confidence rests in His presence and power. This psalm also invites us to look back and name the ways God has delivered us. Remembered rescue produces present worship. The more clearly we recognize what He has brought us through, the more confidently we can trust Him with what still lies ahead.

- *What circumstances can make life feel narrow, trapped, or suffocating?*
- *How can God save us within a battle even before He saves us from it?*
- *Describe one time when God became your strength because your own strength was insufficient.*
- *Create a personal list of three images that describe how God has cared for you. Why did you choose them?*

## Week 20: “Our God Who Guides US”

### Wk 20 - Day 1: Genesis 20

**Explanation:** Genesis 20 finds Abraham traveling into the region of Gerar. Once again, he introduces Sarah as his sister because he fears that someone will kill him to take her. Abimelech, king of Gerar, brings Sarah into his household without knowing that she is Abraham’s wife. Before anything happens, God comes to Abimelech in a dream and warns him that Sarah is married. Abimelech explains that he acted with an innocent heart and clean hands. God responds, “I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me.” The word translated “integrity,” carries the idea of innocence, completeness, or sincerity. Abimelech did not knowingly rebel against God, but he was still moving toward a destructive act. God intervened to guide him away from a sin he did not yet understand. God’s warning is both serious and merciful. Abimelech must return Sarah, but God also tells him that Abraham is a prophet who will pray for him. Abraham had acted fearfully and dishonestly, yet God did not abandon His covenant purpose. He corrected Abraham, protected Sarah, warned Abimelech, and preserved the promised family through whom Isaac would soon be born. The chapter ends with Abraham praying, God healing Abimelech’s household, and Sarah being restored. God’s guidance protected everyone involved from consequences they could not fully see.

**Application:** Genesis 20 reminds us that God sometimes guides us by interrupting the direction we have chosen. A closed door, conviction, warning, confrontation, or unexpected delay may be an act of protection rather than punishment. Abimelech did not know the whole truth, but God graciously revealed what he needed to know before irreversible damage occurred. We should remain sensitive when God exposes something we have misunderstood or overlooked. Abraham’s failure also shows that fear can lead us away from God’s direction. Rather than trusting God to protect him, Abraham attempted to manage the situation through deception. When fear becomes our guide, we often create complications that obedience would have avoided. Yet our hope is found in our God who guides us even when we have made poor decisions. He does not approve of our failure, but He can correct our course, protect His purposes, and lead us back into obedience.

- *Why do you think Abraham repeated the same fearful mistake he made earlier in his life?*
- *How can fear become a guide that moves us away from faith and obedience?*
- *How might God use conviction, correction, or a closed door to guide someone away from harm?*
- *Is there an area where fear has caused you to manage circumstances rather than trust God?*

### Wk 20 - Day 2: Matthew 20

**Explanation:** Matthew 20 begins with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Workers are hired at different times of the day, yet the landowner generously gives each one the same full-day wage. Those who worked longest complain, but the landowner reminds them that he has treated them fairly and has the right to be generous. The parable challenges the belief that God’s grace can be earned or measured by comparison. Jesus is guiding His disciples away from pride and toward a kingdom shaped by grace. Jesus then leads them toward Jerusalem and gives a detailed prediction of His betrayal, suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection. He knows exactly where the journey is leading. The disciples, however, are still thinking about position and recognition. The mother of James and John asks that her sons receive the highest places in Jesus’ kingdom. Jesus responds by teaching that greatness in His kingdom is not found in power over others but in service to them. The Greek word translated “minister,” diakonos, refers to a servant, while “servant,” doulos, describes a bondservant or slave. Jesus presents Himself as the supreme example: “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Jesus leads by giving Himself for others. The chapter closes with two blind men crying out for mercy. Although the crowd attempts to silence them, Jesus stops, listens, and restores their sight. After being healed, they follow Him.

**Application:** Jesus does more than point out the right path, He walks it before us. He leads His disciples toward the cross and shows that God’s way is marked by grace, sacrifice, humility, and service. We often want God to guide us toward greater comfort, influence, or recognition. Jesus may instead guide us toward serving people who cannot repay us, surrendering our preferences, or choosing faithfulness over status. The disciples were physically following Jesus while still misunderstanding the direction of His kingdom. We can do the same. We may participate in Christian activity while continuing to pursue worldly definitions of success and greatness. Our God who guides us leads us away from comparison and self-promotion and into the way of Christ. His direction is not always upward in position; sometimes it is downward into humble service. But the path of surrender is also the path on which we become most like Jesus.

- *Why do people often struggle when God appears to show someone else unexpected grace?*
- *How can comparison make it harder to follow God’s direction for our own lives?*
- *Where might Jesus be guiding you to serve rather than seek recognition?*
- *What is the difference between worldly greatness and greatness in Jesus’ kingdom?*



# OUR MIGHTY God

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

## Wk 20 - Day 3: Nehemiah 10

**Explanation:** After confessing their sins and remembering God's faithfulness in Nehemiah 9, the people make a written covenant in Nehemiah 10. Leaders, priests, Levites, and representatives of the people place their names upon it, publicly committing themselves to follow God's direction. They enter into an oath "to walk in God's law." They were not merely agreeing to admire God's Word; they were committing to order their lives by it. Their commitment becomes practical. They promise not to form marriages that would lead them into idolatry, not to conduct ordinary business on the Sabbath, and to observe the sabbatical year. They also commit themselves to supporting worship, maintaining the temple, bringing offerings, and providing for those who served there. The repeated statement near the chapter's conclusion is significant: "We will not forsake the house of our God." Their renewed obedience was not limited to private belief. It affected their homes, schedules, finances, worship, relationships, and community responsibilities. God's guidance had already been revealed in His Word. The question was whether His people would commit themselves to follow it.

**Application:** Many people want God's guidance for major decisions while ignoring the direction He has already provided in Scripture. Nehemiah 10 reminds us that following God begins with obeying what He has clearly said. The people did not make vague promises to "do better." They identified specific areas where their lives needed to change. Genuine commitment produces practical obedience. God's Word should guide more than our church attendance or devotional life. It should shape our relationships, use of time, financial priorities, worship, rest, and responsibilities toward others. There is also value in making our commitments visible and accountable. The people placed their names on the covenant because they understood that obedience was not merely a temporary emotional response. Our God who guides us has not left us without direction. His Word provides a reliable path. The issue is often not that we need more information, but that we need greater willingness to follow the truth we already know.

- *What is the difference between appreciating God's Word and walking according to it?*
- *Why is it easier to make a general promise than to identify specific areas of obedience?*
- *What area of life do Christians sometimes resist allowing Scripture to direct?*
- *Why do people sometimes ask God for new direction while ignoring instructions He has already given?*

## Wk 20 - Day 4: Acts 20

**Explanation:** Acts 20 records Paul's journey through Macedonia and Greece as he encourages believers and prepares to travel toward Jerusalem. In Troas, he teaches late into the night. A young man named Eutychus falls from an upper window and is believed to be dead, but God restores his life through Paul. Paul later meets the Ephesian elders at Miletus and reflects upon his ministry among them. He reminds them that he served with humility, endured opposition, taught publicly and privately, and proclaimed both repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Paul explains that he is going to Jerusalem "bound in the spirit." The expression communicates that he felt compelled or constrained to go, even though the Holy Spirit had warned him that suffering awaited him there. God's guidance did not lead Paul toward an easy road, but it gave him confidence that the road was part of his calling. Paul then charges the elders to watch over themselves and the church. Paul warns that false teachers will come, so the leaders must remain alert and anchored in God's truth. He entrusts them to God and to "the word of his grace," which is able to build them up.

**Application:** Acts 20 shows that the Holy Spirit's guidance does not always lead away from difficulty. Paul knew suffering was ahead, yet he also knew God was directing him forward. The presence of hardship does not automatically mean we have missed God's will. God often guides one step at a time. Paul did not know every detail of what would happen in Jerusalem, but he knew enough to obey the next step. We may want a complete map, while God asks us to follow with present faithfulness. The chapter also shows that those who guide others must first watch their own lives. Spiritual leadership is not merely giving instructions; it is shepherding with humility, truth, sacrifice, and careful attention. Our God who guides us also guides His church through faithful leaders and the truth of His Word. We should remain sensitive to the Spirit, grounded in Scripture, and willing to follow even when the path requires courage and sacrifice.

- *Why might God guide someone toward a path that includes difficulty?*
- *What is the difference between being led by God and being guaranteed an easy outcome?*
- *Why must leaders watch over themselves before attempting to watch over others?*
- *How can we faithfully take the next step without knowing every detail of the future?*

# OUR MIGHTY

2026 BIBLE READING GUIDE

God

## Wk 20 - Day 5: Psalm 25

**Explanation:** Psalm 25 is a prayer for guidance, forgiveness, and protection. David begins by lifting his soul to the Lord and declaring his trust in Him. He is surrounded by enemies and aware of his own failures, yet he turns to God rather than allowing fear or shame to direct him. David repeatedly asks, “Shew me thy ways...teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth.” The Hebrew word “way,” can refer to a road, journey, or manner of life. David is not merely asking which direction to travel; he wants his entire life to follow God’s way. He connects guidance with humility: “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.” The word translated “meek,” describes those who are humble, teachable, and dependent upon God. Pride assumes it already knows the way; humility is willing to be corrected and taught. David also asks God not to remember the sins of his youth but to remember him according to divine mercy. Guidance is not reserved for people who have never failed. God graciously teaches sinners who turn to Him. The psalm declares that all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. Even when David cannot understand the road ahead, he can trust the character of the One leading him.

**Application:** Psalm 25 teaches us that guidance begins with surrender: “Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” Before asking God to show us His path, we must be willing to release our preferred direction. God guides the humble because humble people are teachable. We may ask for direction while secretly hoping God will approve the decision we have already made. True guidance requires a willingness to be corrected, redirected, or told to wait. Past failure does not disqualify us from God’s direction. David openly confesses his sin while continuing to ask God to lead him. Our God who guides us is also merciful. He does not merely point out where we went wrong; He teaches us how to walk forward. When the future is unclear, we can trust that God’s paths are consistent with His mercy and truth. We may not understand every turn, but we can know the heart of our Guide.

- *What is the difference between asking God to guide us and asking Him to approve our plans?*
- *Why is humility necessary for receiving God’s direction?*
- *How might regret over past failure prevent someone from seeking God’s guidance?*
- *Think of a time when God redirected your plans. What did you understand later that you could not see at the time?*