

The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 31

“Following the Right Examples”

Study: Isaiah 32:1-8

Reading: Psalm 1:1-6, 14:1-5

Memory: Romans 8:13

Every year, companies pay millions of dollars for a 30 second ad to be shown during the Super Bowl. This is because statistics show that almost 50 percent of the people in America watch the Super Bowl which makes for a huge audience. Not only do these companies pay for those advertisements, but one of the things these companies do is hire athletes or actors to be in these ads. They have found that attaching a famous person with an advertisement often leads to higher sales. Why? We as humans naturally want to honor and respect someone, and actors and athletes are the ones in our society that are exalted.

Today, we are going to see how it is important that we exalt the right people and choose to follow the right examples.

What Does the Bible Say?

The beginning of chapter 32 appears to point forward to the future reign of the Messiah. One day, there will be a king who comes to the throne of Israel who will reign in complete righteousness and all of his children will follow the way of justice. The people would find great relief in this type of leader, just as they would find shelter in the middle of a storm or water in an arid desert. The Messiah will produce peace like a large shady area in the middle of a scorching, dry land. Unlike many of the people in the days when Isaiah was writing this, the followers of this king would not be stubborn. They would be greatly receptive to the commands of the king because He will be following the command of God. The lives of many would be transformed as many who once made a hasty, foolish decision would not take their time to make wise choices. Those who were stammering because they were drunk would now be sober and able to talk plainly (vs 1-4).

Those who acted like fools and those who took advantage of others would not be exalted anymore. One may wonder why any society would exalt fools and those who lived selfishly, but a look at our own society and who we exalt reveals that we do much of the same. We exalt athletes

and actors, listening to their opinions and advice more than we do godly men who have a heart for holiness and righteousness. Verse 6 described how these fools just spout out foolishness because their heart is bent on their ungodliness. Fools spout things out of their mouths that are incorrect and lead people further away from God. They think that they may be helping people, but in reality they are driving them further away from where God wants them to be (vs 5-6).

A “scoundrel” (ESV) is a little different. He chose to practice what was evil and schemed about how he could take advantage of others. Even when people were truly in need, he ignored those needs and did whatever he could to gain from others. On the other hand, the person who is noble and will be respected and honored by God is one who chooses to follow God. He chooses to care for the needs of others. He chooses to do what is right regardless of everything else going on around him (vs 7-8).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Who do you honor and respect? It is very easy to respect and trust the wrong people because that is who everyone else looks to. When a society respects and honors the wrong people, this is a great detriment to that society and eventually they start calling evil good and good evil. One of the ways that you can make a difference in this area is to choose to respect the right people. Respect those godly individuals who display a love for God and love for others. This doesn't mean that you put them up on a pedestal because they are better people, it simply means that you encourage others to follow the example of those who love God rather than the example of those who love themselves.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the godly examples He had brought into your life.*
- * *Ask God to help you honor the right people.*
- * *Praise God because He is the source of wisdom and honor.*

Thought for the day

How was a king going to reign (vs 1)?

Why was this going to be so different from the way many kings had ruled?

What descriptions were used to reveal how the people would feel when the righteous king was on the throne (vs 2)?

How can a righteous ruler make a big difference?

Why is the idea of listening and seeing mentioned in verse 3?

How will the king help change heart and lives (vs 4)?

How will the people view fools differently (vs 5)?

How are fools described (vs 6)?

Using that definition, write out what you think a fool would look like in today's society.

How can you avoid being this type of person?

How is a “scoundrel” described (vs 7 - ESV)?

Using that definition, write out what you think a scoundrel would look like in today's society.

How can you avoid being a scoundrel?

What do you think it means to be “noble” (vs 8 - ESV)?

How can you put this into practice in your daily life?

How can you show honor and respect to those who are noble?

“Complacent or Content”

Study: Isaiah 32:9-20

Reading: Philippians 4:4-9, Matthew 5:3-12

Memory: Romans 8:13

After substitute teaching in the public school for many years, one thing that is absolutely clear to me is the importance of strong families. Most of the children who were in honors classes, where the best athletes, and had the best grades came from houses where their parents provided a secure place for them to live and grow. Though many of these parents weren't believers, they seemed to have a sense of moral righteousness and justice. Basically, the more biblical principles they applied to their families, the greater security it provided for their children and the better their children did in school. This was not true in every situation, but was a general observation I notice year from year.

Today, we are going to see that when we follow the principles of God's Word, the end result is peace and security. We will be challenged not to be complacent in our current success in life, but to strive to do things God's way.

What Does the Bible Say?

In verse 9, Isaiah gave an interesting address as he called out to the “women who are at ease” to listen to what he had to say. They were also described as being “complacent.” Why this is specifically addressed to women is unclear, but probably some type of poetic meaning in that day. Basically, Isaiah was challenging them to listen to what He was about to say and to stop being complacent, thinking nothing would happen. It was a challenge to rise up and make a change before judgment and destruction came. Isaiah declared that in a little more than a year they would start to see their harvests fail. This could be that the physical harvest did not go well or it could be that the Assyrian army was going to come and take all the fruit which they had been growing. Basically, this is addressing the group of people who chose to ignore all the warnings that had been given and who chose to continue to live the way they wanted, thinking that everything would go on like normal (vs 9-10).

The warning for those who lived this way was to start to tremble

because they were about to face devastation. Isaiah was not encouraging them to be afraid. They were going to experience great sadness and heartache because their crops would not produce fruit. The joy and happiness that this fruit and the money from it provided would not be there anymore. Instead, thorns and briars were going to grow in their vineyards as their fields would not be able to be worked because they would not have sufficient water to produce fruit (vs 11-13).

Verse 14 causes it to be unclear if Isaiah is speaking of the Assyrian invasion or something further down the road. He mentions how the palace would be abandoned and the city deserted. This did not happen in the Assyrian invasion, but perhaps it could have if the people did not repent. We know it happened later with the Babylonian invasion (vs 14).

The land was going to continue like this until the Spirit of the Lord poured out His blessing on the land and the ground would become fruitful again. This blessing would take place because of the people choosing to act justly to one another and live in righteousness. While sin brought destruction, the effects of righteousness would be peace and rest. They would live in a wonderful, secure place. Before this took place, the city would have to be humiliated and recognize their need for God. The end result of people turning back to God would be blessings and peace (vs 16-20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Though understanding the exact physical circumstances of this passage is difficult since we don't know if he was referring to current events or end time events (probably both), you can learn the valuable lesson God was trying to teach. The people chose not to listen to the Word of God and were complacent in their sin, thinking that judgement would not come. They wanted peace and chose to live in their current blessings, assuming that they did not need to change for those blessing to continue. The answer to true peace and contentment is not ignoring problems and continuing in a way that is not right, but letting the Holy Spirit work and follow His leading. When a person lives in righteousness and acts in justice towards those around him, the end result will be peace and security. This can be seen in a small way in families and churches today. It will be seen in a much greater way in the future kingdom where all men will seek God.

Who was Isaiah speaking to (vs 9)?

When was judgement going to take place (vs 10)?

What was going to happen (vs 10)?

What attitude was he addressing (vs 11)?

Why did he tell them to put sackcloth on and beat their chests (vs 11-12)?

What was going to happen to their soil (vs 13)?

What was going to happen to the joyous houses (vs 13)?

How will happen to the cities (vs 14)?

How will these things be restored (vs 15)?

What will happen when the Holy Spirit reigns (vs 16)?

What are the three result of righteousness given in verse 17?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are these things so desirable?

What three thing are promised to those who follow God (v 18)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What was going to happen to the city before these things could take place (vs 19)? Why?

Who is going to be truly happy and blessed (vs 20)? What do you think this meant?

“Choices and Results”

Study: Isaiah 33:1-9

Reading: Galatians 6:1-10

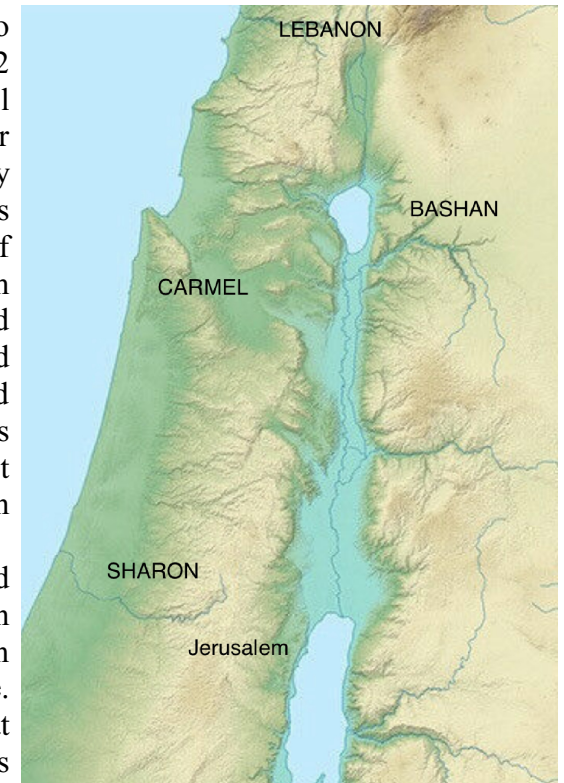
Memory: Romans 8:13

What Does the Bible Say?

Verse 1 does not address a specific nation directly, but was probably a reference to the Assyrian nation and the world powers that would follow. They would be able to conquer and destroy other nations, but they themselves would eventually be destroyed. The punishment and devastation they dished out to others would come back upon them and hurt them in the same way.

Though conquering nations would experience this destruction, the opposite would be experienced by those who waited on God. Verse 2 recalled a time when Israel called on God for deliverance. They understood God’s power was different than the power of the nations around them because His power would not be destroyed. When God stepped in, the nations would scatter and the spoil was compared to a heap of locust that would pile up after an infestation (vs 2-4).

When God was exalted by a nation, that nation would be filled with righteousness and justice. They would experience great salvation from their enemies and the fear of God would be



Geographical Regions mentioned in verse 9

treasured as well as lead to great treasure (vs 5-6).

The opposite would happen when the nation did not follow God. They would see their strongest warriors crying in the street and their roads would be in disarray making travel very dangerous. People would break their word and everyone would be fending for themselves instead of caring for others. This would also produce great destruction to the land. Places like Lebanon which was known for its massive forests would be cut down and Sharon known for its lush green fields would no longer produce crops. The areas of Bashan and Carmel which had an abundance of trees would experience great deforestation. This revealed that not only would the people suffer because of sin, but the whole land would suffer as well (vs 7-9).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you see the contrast between the nation that chose to serve God and the nation that didn't? At times, when Israel chose to follow the ways of God they experienced great blessings. The same nation at other times chose to follow their own desires and faced great destruction. Though this is very clear when you look back at Scripture, it was not as clear to them as they lived their daily lives, just as things aren't as clear to you when you live your day to day life. You don't often experience the blessings of God immediately nor does His destruction happen instantaneously. Often these things take place over time. This makes things difficult because we often make choices on what happens today. By faith, choose to follow God's way today knowing that it will be worth it in the future.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you biblical examples to learn from.*
- * *Ask God to help you live in wisdom today.*
- * *Praise God because He knows what will happen in the future.*

Thought for the day

Who is addressed in verse 1?

What was going to happen to the destroyers when they stopped destroying (vs 1)?

What was God asked to do in verse 2?

What did the people want God to be (vs 2)?

What did God have the ability to do (vs 3)?

What could God give His people (vs 4)?

How was the abundance of spoil described (vs 4)?

What will God do when He is exalted by a nation (vs 5)?

What is righteousness (vs 5)?

What is justice (vs 5)?

What five things does verse 6 say God will be when you look to Him?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Briefly explain what those five things mean?

What happens to those who don't look to God (vs 7)?

What happens to the land and country of the people God chooses to judge (vs 8)?

What places were mentioned in verse 9?

Why were these mentioned? (What point was being made?)

“Wanting To Give Gifts”

Study: Isaiah 33:10-24

Reading: James 1:12-18, Matthew 7:7-11

Memory: Romans 8:13

One of the great joys in my life is the ability that God has given me to be a father. I love my children more than I could ever express and one of my great desires is to provide all that they need and even more. Even as my children move through adulthood, I have a continual desire to give to them and do all I can to help them. This desire is increased the more I see them wanting to do what is right and serve God. Though I want to always be there to help them and guide them, there have been times where I have not wanted to support them physically or financially when they are making wrong decisions. This does not mean my love for them is any less, but I just can't bless them when they are doing wrong like I can when they are doing right.

Today, we are going to read about the blessings God wants to give to His children who seek after Him.

What Does the Bible Say?

The previous verses in chapter 33 pictured the destruction that the Lord would bring to the nations that did not follow Him. God would rise up and be exalted by bringing the worldly powers to their knees. This appears to be an address to the nation of Assyria and how God would turn them away from Jerusalem. Their earthly power and works were compared to chaff and stubble. The chaff was the useless part of heads of grain and the stubble was the stalks that produced the wheat. Both of these reference to things that were not valuable and would often be burnt or blown away and destroyed. Their breath, the statements of pride they made, would come back on them like a fire (v 10-12).

The power of God would be proclaimed to many around when He chose to act. This would cause fear to come over the people, especially those who dwelt in Israel. Those who lived in sin would realize their time of judgement was near, but those who followed the way of God would rejoice after they saw the working of God. Verses 15-16 list the

characteristics of godly individuals and remind the people who live that way that they would be blessed (vs 13-16).

Those who sought after God would be excited to see Him working. They will see the blessings that He has to offer and will not be afraid of His judgements. They will look back to the times of oppression by the mighty armies like Assyria and realize that God brought their great power to nothing. They would no longer have to listen to the ranting of ungodly people in an ungodly language breathing out lies and hate (vs 17-19).

Jerusalem would be delivered and would be at peace. God would be the defender of the city and would deliver them from their troubles. Verse 21 pictured God as a wide river or large mote that would not allow enemy ships to cross. The enemies of Jerusalem were pictured as loose hanging sails on broken masts. Basically that was the picture of a ship dead in the water ready to be taken over by the enemy. God would give His people great spoil, enough that their lame and crippled would have an abundance. The people would no longer be helpless because of the forgiveness and deliverance of God (vs 20-24).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that God wants to bless you? One of the things that is very clear throughout the prophets is that God did not want to judge His people, but He wanted to bless them. God does not reluctantly give things to His children, but He is a loving heavenly Father who is desiring to pour out His blessings on His children. God will not continue to pour His blessings out on you if you do not seek Him. He will bring things along in your life to turn you to Him and those things are often quite difficult to face. You can save yourself much grief and pain in life when you choose to follow Him and His ways.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the blessings that He gives you.*
- * *Ask God to help you seek after Him.*

Thought for the day

What was God going to do (vs 10)?

What did God compare his enemies to (vs 11)? Why?

What were His enemies going to be like (v 12)?

What were God's actions going to do for His fame (vs 13)?

Who was going to be afraid (vs 14)?

Who was not going to be afraid (vs 15)?

Describe how these godly characteristics mentioned in verse 15 look in a person's life today.

What blessings will the righteous have (vs 16)?

What do you think verse 17 means?

What will the godly heart do when terror comes (vs 18)? What do you think this means?

What would the people of Jerusalem no longer have to face (vs 19)?

What will Jerusalem be like (vs 20)?

What was God compared to (vs 21)?

What descriptions are given of God (vs 22)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How were the enemies of God pictured (vs 23)?

What will be forgiven (vs 24)?

“Looking to the Future”

Study: Micah 4:1-13

Reading: Mark 10:17-45

Memory: Romans 8:13

When we first started building our guest house the initial construction went very quickly. Thanks to the help of many work crews and volunteers, within four days after construction began, we had the main structure of the house built. After that, it seemed like the work went extremely slow. It took the next 6 months to finish the inside of the house and get it ready to be used. During those 6 months there were days where I felt it would never be finished. Yet what kept me going was the thought that if I pressed on, it would soon be done. It was that future vision that kept me working and that desire to have it ready for pastors and their families to use that caused me to endure. When it was finally finished, I was so grateful I had persevered.

Today, we are going to see that looking at our future hope can often help us persevere through the difficulties today.

What Does the Bible Say?

We have been attempting to follow chronologically through the kings and prophets following the Reese Chronological Bible. We can't be sure exactly where some of the prophecies occur, but the author tried his best to put things in chronological order. We looked at Micah 1-3 a little while back and will now look at Micah 4-6.

Micah 4 looks forward to the coming of the Messiah. During this time the “mountain of the house of the Lord” will be lifted up above all other mountains. This is a picture of a city and place that is looked to and is exalted above everything else. People will want to go to this place because it is where God will dwell. They will want to travel to that city, the new Jerusalem, where they can learn about God and be taught to follow His ways. People from all the nations of this world will join together in traveling there and worshiping at this mountain. God will be on the throne and as a result everything will be done with order and righteousness. There will be no more need for war and people will turn

their weapons into useful tools since they will no longer be needed for battle. People will be able to live in ease and comfort without fear of his land being invaded and their crops being stolen. There will be nothing to be afraid of during this time. The people will no longer pursue after false gods and seek to worship idols, but will worship the true and living God (vs 1-5).

God is going to take special care to reach out to those who were despised in the world. He will be their king and will protect them from any future harm. This was meant to be an encouragement to all those who suffered at the unjust hands of others. Often the righteous suffered the most and one day those who suffered would suffer no more (vs 6-7).

Jerusalem would be the tower in the center of it all. It would be the place where people would come to worship. This will all happen in the future, but the current situation would not be as easy. Before all of this would happen, Jerusalem was going to be attacked and face great heartaches. Many of the people would be carried off to Babylon where the Lord would redeem them and return them to the land (vs 8-10).

Many nations over time would continue to despise and attempt to destroy Jerusalem, but they do not realize that God has an ultimate plan for His city. The nations will come and go, but Jerusalem will one day be exalted and restored. They will be the world power and all others will be subject to them (vs 11-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Sometimes when reading through the prophets it is difficult to make things apply to you personally, but God has a reason for putting things in His Word. One of the great themes found throughout prophecy and here in this passage is the theme of hope. If Micah 4 is placed in the proper place historically, the people of Jerusalem were about to face an attack from the Assyrian army. Even though they would survive and eventually fall to Babylon, it was not the end for them. God had a great plan for His people and His city. This should give you great encouragement because God has great hope for you. You may not ever realize the full benefits of following Him this side of eternity, but you can rest assured that following Him is worth it. When you feel like quitting or giving up. When you think that things are getting too hard. Remember that God is still on the throne and it will all be worth it.

What time frame is Micah speaking about (vs 1)?

What was going to be established (vs 1)?

What will many nations do (vs 2)?

How is this opposite of what was happening?

What will God do (vs 3)?

What will be the results (vs 3)?

Why are the experiences talked about in verse 4 so encouraging?

How will the people choose to walk in that day (vs 5)?

Who is God going to gather (vs 6)? Why?

What does verse 7 reveal about the power of God?

What was Jerusalem going to be (v 8)?

What scenario do verses 9-11 picture?

Where did Micah predict the people would be taken (vs 10)?

What was God going to do for them (vs 10)?

What have many nations wanted to do to Jerusalem (vs 11)?

What don't these nations know (vs 12)?

What did God say He would make the nation of Israel like (vs 13)?

What were they going to do to their enemies (vs 13)?

What would they do after their victories (vs 13)?

“The Coming Messiah”

Study: Micah 5:1-15

Reading: 2 King 10:25-29, Psalm 20:1-9

Memory: Romans 8:13

One of the things that I disliked most when I moved to Michigan and was involved in several building projects was the constant need for building inspections. Since I didn't always know what I was doing, there were a few times where I failed my inspections since I didn't have something done according to code. Though at times it was frustrating, when I took time to think about why they did inspections, I was thankful. I realize that when they didn't do inspections many years ago, there were great problems that could happen from having a fire to having houses collapse. There is peace of mind for many people when they build or move into a place knowing that everything was built up to code.

Today, we are going to see that we can have peace when we realize that we can trust in the Word of God. It is a code and standard that never changes and it is given to us for our good.

What Does the Bible Say?

Chapter 5 appears to be predicting the invasion of Jerusalem by Babylon. Verse 1 is probably a reference to the capture of King Zedekiah in 586 B.C. Verse 2 transitions to a future hope who was going to come from Bethlehem. It is described as "Bethlehem Ephrathah." The "Ephrathah" indicates which Bethlehem the writer was referring to since there was a town in Galilee named Bethlehem. "Ephrathah" meant "fruitful" since Bethlehem in Judah was known for its vineyards and olive orchards. Though this village was a rather small village, it was going to become famous because it would be the birth place of the Messiah (vs 1-2).

Verse 3 moves past the time of the first coming of Christ in Bethlehem to His return to rule as the Messiah. The people of Israel will be without a true king from the time Zedekiah was taken captive until the time that Jesus comes to rule and reign. The picture of the woman giving birth was not one of Mary, but that of the spiritual rebirth of the nation when the Messiah returns. During the reign of the Messiah, the people will live in peace (vs 3-4).

Micah mentioned Assyria in verse 5, but it appears that this mention is not actually talking about the nation of Assyria, but what it represented. It represented the enemies of Israel. When the enemies attempt to defeat Israel, they will not succeed because Israel will have "seven shepherds" and "eight princes." This reference seems to be one that says Israel will have plenty of leaders and the power needed to defeat their enemies. They would defeat Assyria (representing the enemies of Israel) and would also defeat Nimrod which could be a reference to Babylon (vs 5-6).

Israel will be restored to great numbers. Like the dew on the grass they will spread throughout the land without being interfered with. They would be like a lion who would tear any of its foes that stood in its way. No adversaries would be able to stand against them. The Messiah will provide ultimate victory and all the enemies of Israel will be gone (vs 7-9).

Verses 10-14 described how God will remove all the earthly things the people of Judah and Israel chose to trust in rather than Him. Their horses, chariots, weapons, idols and fortune tellers would all be gone and He would be the One who they trusted and relied upon. God would use this time to enact His judgement on all the wicked things and nations of the world and would purify His land (vs 10-15).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Once again, you are reminded of the great future hope for Israel and for you as a follower of Christ. In this world full of pain and misery where there are constant wars and fighting, there is great hope knowing that there will be a day when all will be at peace. Though this life is great at times, at other times, because of sin, it is very troubled. The picture of future hope that is given is one of abundance and peace, featuring many of the great things we have here on this earth now, just without the sin. You can trust that this will come true, just as God said the Messiah would come out of Bethlehem. That little portion of fulfilled prophecy gives you hope in the future fulfillment of all that is written about in Scripture.

What was going to happen to Jerusalem (vs 1)?

What did verse 2 say about Bethlehem?

How did that come true?

What was God doing to do to Israel (vs 3)?

What is God going to be for Israel (vs 4)?

What does verse 5 say the Messiah will be?

Who was God going to deliver them from (vs 6)?

What is a “remnant” (vs 7)?

What will the remnant of Israel be like (vs 8)?

What was going to happen to the enemies of Israel (vs 9)?

What things was God going to cut off and destroy (vs 10-14)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

How can you trust in things similar to this today instead of trusting in God?

What was God going to do to the nations (vs 15)?

Why was He going to do this?

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.