

The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 32

“Walk Humbly With God”

Study: Micah 6:1-16

Reading: 1 Samuel 15:1-35

Memory: Romans 8:14

What Does the Bible Say?

Chapter 6 opens with the picture of a courtroom scene where the mountains are called as witnesses in a case where Israel is being accused of turning against God. The hills and mountains had been witnesses of their great treacheries, especially at times when Israel would worship the false gods at the top of these mountains. In this trial, God asked the Israelites what He had done to make them tired of Him. He then went on to describe how He had delivered them from the slavery of Egypt by giving them Moses, Aaron and Miriam to lead them. God stopped the attempts of Balak to destroy Israel and protected them from the attacks of other enemies. He guided them each step of the way so they could see His righteous love for them (vs 1-5).

Verse 6 transitioned from the voice of God to that of Micah asking what many of the people were thinking. They had reached the point where they didn't fully understand what God wanted from them. They had been giving their offerings to Him, but from the response of God, it seemed that their offerings were not good enough. No matter how much it seemed they gave to God, God was not pleased. Even if they sacrificed their first born children, they all felt that they could not do enough to please God. Yet, they missed the point of what God really wanted. He did not want all of their sacrifices or their children to be offered to Him. This is how the pagans tried to appease their gods. What God wanted was for them to “do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with their God.” Yes, He had instructed them to give offerings, but those were to be out of a heart of appreciation to Him. They were an expression of worship, but not the worship itself (vs 6-8).

The inhabitants of Jerusalem were challenged to fear God and understand the discipline He was bringing into their lives. God could only allow the wickedness of His people to continue for so long until He chose to act. He revealed specific sins that many of the people were involved in. He made reference to the merchants who used deceitful weights to give the people less than they thought they were buying. He rebuked the

rich men who violently treated those around him for his own gain. He referenced the lies that were constantly being spoken from the lips of those who sought deceitful gain (vs 9-12).

In response to this God was going to strike them with a very hurtful blow and would cause great problems and heartaches for the people. They would have little to eat and their hunger would not be satisfied. The food they would attempt to store away would not last and what lasted would be taken from them by their enemies. They would sow crops and prepare oil from their olives. They would produce wine from their grapes, but they would see very little use of these things because those things would be taken from them. They had lived like the wicked kings of the northern tribes and as a result, they would be punished (v 13-16).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Scripture is full of many references which challenge the people of God not to just serve Him with their outward deeds, but to follow Him with their hearts. Because this is mentioned so many times, you can see that this was and is a constant problem for the children of God. It is so easy to be deceived into thinking that your outward deeds for God are enough, yet fail to follow Him with your heart. How can you know if you are doing this? God gave some simple things that He wanted the Israelites to do before they sacrificed anything for Him. He wanted them to do what is just. To treat others fairly and equally. He wanted them to be constantly showing kindness and mercy towards each other. This meant that they were not to look down on others and condemn others. They were not to constantly judge or exalt themselves, but were to reach out and help others who had less than they did or who were different than they were. They were also to walk humbly with God. They were to seek a relationship with God and humble themselves before Him as their God. God desires these same things from you today!

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Thank God for instructing you on what He wants from you.*

* *Ask God to show you any area where you can grow and improve.*

Thought for the day

What were the mountains called to do (v 1-2)?

What had the mountains witnessed (vs 2)?

What did God want to know (vs 3)?

What had God done for His people (vs 4)?

What did God remind the Israelites of (v 5)?

What question I being asked in verse 6?

What does the large amount of rams and oil emphasize (vs 7)?

What three things does God desire (vs 8)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Briefly take time to describe how you are practicing these things today.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What was God not able to overlook (vs 9-10)?

What were many merchants doing (vs 11)?

How did the rich men treat others (vs 12)?

What was rampant in Israel (vs 12)?

What was going to happen as a result (vs 13-15)?

How had they chosen to live (vs 16)?

What was going to be the result (vs 16)?

“Looking to God”

Study: Micah 7:1-10

Reading: Hebrews 13:1-6, Psalm 121:1-8

Memory: Romans 8:14

My children were in a Christian school for a period of time, were home schooled for a year and went to public school for much of their schooling. Each one had its positives and negatives and my wife and I had to simply trust that God would use every circumstance for their good. One of the hardest things for us as parents was the time they spent in public school having very few Christian friends. We as parents wanted them to find good friends to experience life with, yet it seemed that they were few and far between. This was probably harder on us than it was on them because both my wife and I had fond memories of our high school friends. Though it was difficult, we know that they were where God wanted them to be and had to continually trust in the fact that God could be their source of help and guidance each moment of the day.

Today, we are going to see how Micah felt like he was alone in following God, yet He also knew that God would not fail him.

What Does the Bible Say?

One of the things that is easy to overlook as we read through prophecy is the personal feelings of the prophets. They went through persecution at times and great mental anguish having to see some of the events that were going to take place. In chapter 7, Micah starts out with the declaration “Woe is me!” These visions and the mission that God called him to carry out caused him to feel like a tree or vine that had been stripped of its fruit. Much of this was because it seemed that very few people wanted to hear what he had to say. He felt like there were no godly people left and that almost everyone he met was focused on evil rather than righteousness. Instead of practicing justice and fairness, the leaders were controlled by bribes and selfish desires. Micah compared even the best leaders to briars and thorn bushes. As a result, the day of judgement would soon come (vs 1-4).

Micah warned the people not to trust anyone. They were to guard

what they said even to their closest neighbor. He had seen families turn on each other and people of the same household turn in to enemies. All of this was very disturbing, but Micah declared that He was going to continue to look to the Lord even though there was wickedness all around him. He knew that even though he could not trust the men around him, he could trust God (vs 5-7).

Verse 8 appears to be a transition from a personal expression of Micah to an expression given by the nation of Judah. Judah was going to fall because of its sin, but they would rise again. Once they had been humbled, they would reach out to God and He would guide them back to Him. They would not escape His judgement but would bear His wrath for their sin, yet they would also experience His great forgiveness as He would stand up for them as a nation once again. He would bring them to the light once again and cause the enemies of Israel to see that He was the ruler of the world. Those who had mocked the God of Israel would be defeated and would realize that all of their mocking was in vain (vs 8-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you ever get discouraged when it seems that very few people around you want to do what is right? Maybe you are the only one in your family, school or workplace who seems to care about God. This can often be discouraging, yet you can be encouraged by the fact that you are not alone. The prophets experienced this feeling at times and so did many other men in the Bible. Though these times weren’t always easy, just like Micah said in 7:7, you can look to God and God will hear you. Even when you feel like no one else is listening or that no one cares, you can always trust and count on God.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God because He will always hear you.*
- * *Ask God to encourage you when you feel like you are alone.*
- * *Praise God because He will always do what is best.*

Thought for the day

What expression did Micah start the chapter out with (vs 1)?

What did Micah compare his feelings with (vs 1)?

What did Micah express about others around him (vs 2)?

What do you think the end of verse 2 meant?

****This probably didn't mean that they all wanted to kill each other, but was a phrase that meant that everyone was in life for themselves, taking advantage of one another and not caring who they harmed.*

What had they figured out how to do well (vs 3)?

What situation did Micah describe in verse 3?

What did Micah compare the best of the people to (vs 4)?

What was going to come (vs 4)?

Who could they not have confidence in (vs 5)?

What does the end of verse 5 express about how people would turn on each other?

What was going to happen to families (vs 6)?

How can you see this happen today?

How did Micah choose to live differently (vs 7)?

What was Micah confident of (vs 7)?

What was going to happen to Judah (vs 8)?

What was Judah going to face (vs 9)? Why?

What did God have planned for His people (vs 10)?

“The Deepest Sea”

Study: Micah 7:11-20

Reading: Psalm 103:1-22

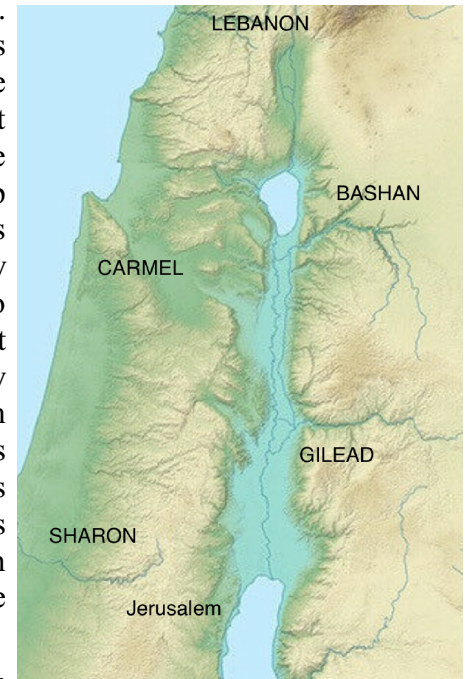
Memory: Romans 8:14

What Does the Bible Say?

Israel would be humbled because of their sin, but they would be exalted again. We see the phrase “in that day” used in verse 11. Most of the time that phrase is used, the prophesy directs us to a future time that has not occurred yet and is pointing to the millennial reign of Christ. This is a reference to a time where the walls of Jerusalem would be extended far beyond what they were at that time. This a significant statement since around this time Hezekiah had expanded the walls of Jerusalem to the largest it had ever been. Yet, in the future the city would continue to grow. People would come from everywhere to be a part of what was Going on in the city. Much of the rest of the earth would be desolate because many of those who rejected God would be killed. This coincides with all the catastrophes that are mentioned in the book of Revelations and elsewhere (vs 11-13).

The Carmel mountain range was full of thick forests and the picture we are given is of a sheep lost in that forest. Micah calls upon God to be the good Shepherd and lead that sheep out of the forest into the fertile plains of Bashan and Gilead. It is basically a call asking for God to bless Israel so they once again would be an abundant and fruitful nation. God responded by declaring how he would show them marvelous things once again, just as He did when He brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. The nations all around Israel would once again fear the God of the Hebrews and have no power before Him (vs 14-17).

In awe of this response from God,



Micah broke out in praise to God declaring that there was no one like God. He chose to forgive the sins of the people and promised to restore them to a mighty and privileged position. He would not continue to be angry at His children because of His great and faithful love. He would pour out His compassion on His people by casting their sin into the deepest sea. This was a powerful picture of the forgiveness and love of God that was so different than the gods of that day. God will restore the fortunes of Israel and they will become the exalted nation (vs 18-20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you understand the great love and forgiveness of God? Micah presented a powerful picture of the love and care of God. First, he pictured God as a caring shepherd searching for a lost sheep in the thickets of the forest. Then he pictured that shepherd leading the sheep to lush green pastures. Following that, he described the great forgiveness of God, declaring that God places sin in the deepest part of the sea. Once something was lost in the sea, especially the deepest part of the sea, it could never be retrieved again. Even with our great technology today, we can't reach the deepest part of the sea. Micah was not pointing to a physical place, but giving us a picture of how God chooses to forgive our sins. He chooses not to bring them up anymore and chooses not to continue to hold those things against us. Instead, in love, mercy and compassion, He gives us far more than we could ever deserve.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for His forgiveness.*
- * *Ask God to help you forgive as He forgives.*
- * *Praise God because He is a God of love and mercy.*

Thought for the day

What was going to be extended (vs 11)?

Where will people come from to be part of Jerusalem (vs 12)?

What will happen to the rest of the earth (vs 13)? Why?

What did Micah ask God to do (vs 14)?

What were Bashan and Gilead known for (vs 14)?

What did Micah ask God to do again (vs 15)?

Who is going to be ashamed (vs 15-16)? Why?

What is going to happen to the nations that rejected God (vs 17)?

What two phrases did Micah use to describe the way God chose to deal with sin (v 18)?

What does God choose not to hold on to (vs 18)?

What does God delight in (vs 18)?

What will God display towards His people (vs 19)?

What will God do with the sins of His people (vs 19)?

Why are these such powerful descriptions?

What two things was God going to show to His people (vs 20)?

- 1.
- 2.

What had been promised by God to His people?

How can the powerful truths from this passage apply to your everyday life?

“Upheld By His Hand”

Study: Isaiah 41:1-10

Reading: Ezra 1:1-11, Psalm 37:1-40

Memory: Romans 8:14

When I first started building an ice rink several years ago, I had to build it on some ground where the slope was almost 20 inches from one end to the other. This meant that when I filled it with water on one end there would be around 23 inches of water, and on the other end I would have about 3 inches of water. I found out the hard way a few times that the size with almost 2 feet of water needed a lot of support because of the pressure that amount of water put on the boards and stakes I was using to keep the water in the liner. More than once, I had a blowout where my boards broke or my stakes gave way causing thousands of gallons of water to spill out. I had to learn the hard way how important it was to have proper support.

Today, we are going to see that when we trust in other people to be our support, things will end in failure. When we trust in God to be our support, we will find great victory.

What Does the Bible Say?

The nations were challenged to listen to God’s accusations against them because of their sin. They were then challenged to speak up against these accusations and defend themselves before He cast judgment. Of course, they would really have no defense because they were guilty. The judgement would be carried out from the east upon those nations. This appears to be a reference to the rise of the Persian empire led by Cyrus the Great. The Assyrians would be turned back by God when they tried to conquer Jerusalem, but the Babylonians would be successful 100 years later. Their reign would not last long because God was going to stir up the Medes and the Persians to destroy Babylon and take over all the nations that Babylon had conquered. Babylon was great, but the Persian empire was greater and would conquer much more land. All of this was going to be orchestrated by God, though the men doing the battle didn’t fully realize that they were on a mission from God. In Ezra 1, it is recorded that Cyrus gave some credit to God stating that God gave Him

power so that the Israelites could return back to Israel, but overall God was stirring and moving in the nations and they had no idea He was behind it all (vs 1-4).

Though the judgement was coming and people were afraid, they did not turn to God for help. Instead, they turned to their neighbors and encouraged each other to be strong. They would work together making themselves stronger, constantly assuring themselves that things would be okay (vs 5-7).

The nations who served foreign gods attempted to console themselves, but they would not find consolation or help. The nation that God would help was the nation of Israel, His chosen people, when they turned to Him and looked for help. Verses 8-9 described the special calling that the nation of Israel had and how God would never cast them away. They did not have to fear or worry about what would happen because He was on their side. He would give them the strength and power they needed when they looked to Him. In fact, while Persia was invading and conquering other nations, they paid to have much of Jerusalem rebuilt and allowed the Israelites to return back to their capital. While all the other nations lived in fear of the Persians, God was blessing the Israelites through the Persians (vs 8-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

The beginning of chapter 41 clearly presents two clearly different paths. There was the way of those who chose to seek each other for help and encouragement and those who chose to look to God. Those who tried to find comfort and help in each other would find brief moments of peace, but it would not change the judgement they would face. Those who looked to God would find great restoration because ultimately God was in control. Verse 10 sums up the way you should live each day if you are a believer who is following God. You do not have to live in fear. You do not have to be dismayed because God is your help and strength. He is the one that allows world powers to rise and fall, and He will always do what is right on your behalf.

Thought for the day

What did God say was going to happen (vs 1)?

Where was this judgement going to come from (vs 2)?

What would God allow at every step (vs 2)?

Where was this king going to be able to conquer (vs 3)?

****By saying he would have victory in places where his feet had not walked, it was an indication that he would conquer new territory that had not been conquered before.*

What question was asked in verse 4? Why?

What declaration was made in verse 4?

How were people going to respond to this impending judgement (vs 5)?

Though verse 6 sounds like a good thing, why was it not?

How do you see this type of response in our society today?

How did their action present a false security (vs 7)?

How did God describe Israel (vs 8)?

What did God say He had done for Israel (vs 9)?

What did God call them (vs 9)? Why?

Why do you think Scripture is full of the phrase “Fear not” (vs 10)?

What does it mean to be dismayed (vs 10)? Why shouldn't we be dismayed?

What three things did God say He would do for His children?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“God’s Provision”

Study: Isaiah 41:11-20

Reading: Philippians 4:10-19, Matthew 6:25-34

Memory: Romans 8:14

The year before we moved to Michigan, we had the best financial year of our lives. God used this year to let us know that we could step out in faith and trust Him to meet our needs. The year after we stepped out in faith and moved to Michigan, we had one of the worst financial years of our lives. We found ourselves digging a financial hole that seemed to only get deeper year after year. I remember a time where I simply had to stop trying so hard to make everything work and begin focusing on casting my burdens on the Lord. I started praying that God would move the mountains of debt that we had found ourselves in and which seemed impossible to get out of. Step by step He started to move that mountain and within a few years of that focused prayer, the mountains was gone. God removed it in ways that were miraculous at times and ways that were simple daily provisions.

Today, we are going to see that we do not have to fear others or fear our circumstances. We will be reminded how God will fight for us and always give us what we need.

What Does the Bible Say?

Verse 10 described how the children of God did not need to fear anything since God was on their side. The thought continues in verse 11 as God described how He would put to shame and confound all those who tried to fight against His followers. Those who chose to do battle with God’s children would try to fight, but God would step in on behalf of His own. The reference to the right hand in verse 13 is a reference to where their power would come from. God would hold their right hand and be their source of strength. They would have nothing to fear because He was going to be the One that would help them (vs 11-13).

God once again emphasized that His people did not need to be afraid. He was on their side and He declared that He would be their helper. He was going to be their Redeemer, the One who would save them from destruction and deliver them to a better place. God told them they would

be like a new, sharp thresher which would cut down any obstacle that stood in their way. The picture here was that of cutting down hills and mountains, which were symbolic for large obstacles. The enemies of God would be made to be like the chaff which the wind drives away. This would cause great rejoicing in God because they knew and realized these wonderful things could only be done through His power and strength (vs 14-16).

This does not mean that God's children would never face any problems or difficulties. Scripture reveals that many times God allowed his children to go through suffering in order to show Himself mighty to His children and to remind them that He was the source for all they needed. There would be times where they would feel defeated and needed daily food and water to survive, and in those times, God would be there to provide for them. He would open the rivers and fountains of the earth and bless them abundantly. Even in a dry desert or arid land He had the ability to cause water to spring from the ground. He could turn the deserts into great forest to provide shade and the materials His people needed to thrive. God could do these things in a miraculous way as He wanted His people to know that He had done it. He was the One they could look to, rely upon and trust in (vs 17-20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize it is God that gives you what you need? Sometimes God will make you go without in order to show you the great ways He can provide. Other times God is just that continual provider and strength for you. It is very important that you praise God in the good times, the bad time and the in between times. Whether it is a miraculous provision or a weekly paycheck, choose to continue to be in thanks and awe of God for His provision for you. This also means that you don't have to fear what the future may hold. There may be times of economic disaster ahead in our country, but that should not be something to be feared. Yes, you may have less than you have now, but with God on your side, you know that you will always be taken care of.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for providing for your daily needs.*
- * *Ask God to help you continue to live a life of trust.*
- * *Praise God because His resources are unlimited.*

Who will be put to shame (vs 11)?

What does it mean that those who fight against God's children will "be as nothing" (vs 11 - ESV)?

Who will not be found (vs 12)? What does that mean?

What does God hold (vs 13)? What does that mean?

What does God say to us (vs 13)?

Why should you not fear (vs 13)?

Though you are given this command over and over in Scripture, what things in your life cause you to fear? Why?

What is repeated in verse 14?

What did God say He was (vs 14)?

Describe what it means that God is your Redeemer?

What did God say He would make His children into (vs 15)?

What would God's children rejoice in (vs 16)?

What will God do for His children (vs 17)?

What does this reveal about difficult times we may face (vs 17)?

What does God have the ability to do (vs 18)?

What point was God trying to make in verse 19?

What did God want His children to recognize (vs 20)?

Describe how you give thanks and praise to God on a daily basis.

“Knowing the Past and Future”

Study: Isaiah 41:21

Reading: Isaiah 46:1-13, Job 38:1-41

Memory: Romans 8:14

When my son was around 16 he informed me that I needed to sign something for him because he won around \$300 dollars. He had entered a free contest where each week he would predict a winner of certain football games and at the end of the season, he was one of a handful of winners that would share the prize. I was pretty impressed at his ability to do this, but in all reality it involved a great deal of luck. He was able to win by doing a little research and simply guessing right each week. He tried similar contests in the years after that, but has never been able to get it right like he did that one year.

Today, we are going to see that God always wins when He predicts the future. We will be reminded that fulfilled prophecy is one of the great proofs that the Bible is completely accurate.

What Does the Bible Say?

One of the reasons that God judged the northern tribes of Israel was because of their great rebellion and worship of idols. Though Judah under King Hezekiah had removed some idol worship, there were still many in Judah who found themselves seeking to worship their idols rather than God. Verse 21 begins with a challenge for all those who looked to idols to show the proof that the idols were greater. One of the things that the idols could not do is tell them what happened in the past and how they brought victory over the enemies like God did. Nor did these idols have the ability to predict what was going to happen in the future like the one true God could. Describing the past is one thing, but being accurate about the future presented a whole different level of superiority and the only prophets who could do that with complete accuracy were the prophets of God. The evidence clearly showed that the idols of the world were nothing and those who chose to follow these idols were an abomination before the Lord (vs 21-24).

Many commentators believe the next section is describing how God called up Cyrus the Great, the king of the Medo-Persian empire, from the

north and from the “rising sun” (the east) to come and trample down the rulers of the land. Specifically, this was a reference to the Babylonian empire, but also extended to all the lands which the Babylonians had conquered. This was going to happen and it could be counted on because God had declared that it would take place (vs 25).

God was the only one who could know what would happen in the future. No one else could have predicted this and a prediction like this would have been unprecedented. Most nations that were conquered ceased to be a nation. The cities that did rise again after being conquered were often inhabited by different nationalities. The fact that Jerusalem would be completely demolished, but then restored by the Israelites was practically unheard of in those days, but God predicted it would happen and it did come true. Those who worshiped idols could not make the same types of claims because their idols did not speak. Even if the prophets of these foreign gods predicted the future, their predictions would seldom come true (vs 26-29).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize the importance of fulfilled prophecy? Sometimes while studying the prophetic books I feel like I get bogged down reading about the same thing that is predicted in many different ways. Historically I know those things happen and the prophecies came true, but often forget to think about how significant that is. I could say things once and may get lucky occasionally and have it happen, but I repeatedly describe an event and how it was going to happen and I was right on when it took place, people would be absolutely amazed. When you think about how many events that were prophesied about and were fulfilled just like God said, you should be amazed. It should also give you great hope because there are many future prophecies that are still waiting to be fulfilled. You can count on the fact that God will always be right.

Suggestions for Prayer

* Ask God to help you to trust in His knowledge.

* Thank God because He knows what will happen in all things.

Thought for the day

What does verse 21 picture?

What did God challenge the idols of the world to do (vs 22)?

Why did God challenge other gods to tell Him the future (vs 22)?

Why is the ability to know the future a powerful characteristic of God?

Why do you think this sets God apart from the things of the world?

What gives proof that a god is real (vs 23)?

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How does having a God who knows the future change how people think about that God (vs 23)?

What did God say about the idols (vs 24)?

What prediction did God give in verse 25?

How was this king going to defeat his enemies (vs 25)?

Why did God predict this (vs 26)?

Who was not able to know this (vs 26)?

What did God predict would happen to Jerusalem (vs 27)?

Why would this be difficult for anyone to predict?

What did God see about the false gods (vs 28)?

What was God attempting to get the Israelites to see?

What did God declare about the false gods and idols used to represent them (vs 29)?

What are some false gods that we worship in our society today?

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. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.