PANTEGO November 9, 2014 Studies for families in Belonging, Becoming, and going Beyond Volume 16 Number 41

# "JEHOVAH TSIDKENU: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" JEREMIAH 23:1-8

#### This Week's Core Competency

**Eternity** – I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom. John 14:1-4 *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.* 

God made promises in the Old Testament to the nation of Israel. Given what we know about God (Nu 23:19), we expect him to keep his promises to the people to whom he made them. In Jeremiah 23:5 the LORD declares that he will raise up a King. who will reign over Judah and Israel, which implies that the nation, then divided, will one day be reunited. This will occur as a result of the LORD bringing his people back from the countries where he had driven them-Israel from Assyria and Judah from Babylon. The King is referred to figuratively as "a righteous Branch" related to David, suggesting that the Davidic dynasty will be restored in him. In his days, a redeemed nation will live in peace and safety back in "their pasture" (v. 3). Other prophets say the same thing. Isaiah declares: "Unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called

#### No refuge, no safety, in self could I see; Jehovah-tsidkenu my Saviour must be. – Thomas Whitelaw

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever" (9:6-7). And in Ezekiel the LORD says: "I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms . . . My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd (37:21-22, 24). These prophecies and others like them lie behind the angel's announcement to Mary: "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Lk 1:31-32).

Those who suggest that God will not keep his promises to Israel either because the nation forfeited them when they rejected Christ or because the church has replaced Israel are hard pressed to account for three "until" texts found in Luke/Acts: 1) Luke 13:35, "I tell you, you will not see me [Jesus] again *until* you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,'" 2) Luke 21:24b, "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," and 3) Acts 3:21, "He must remain in heaven *until* the time comes for God to con't pg. 2

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restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." And then there's Romans 11:25, "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experiences a hardening in part *until* the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written . . ." The words spoken by Jesus and Peter as well as those penned by Paul imply God has future plans for Israel. Jesus will one day rule on the earth over Israel and the nations from Zion.

Jesus is the one the LORD promised to "raise up to David;" he is the "righteous Branch;" he is the one called "The LORD Our Righteousness." On the significance of his name, one expositor writes: "The manifestation and provision of that righteousness of Jehovah which alone can make men acceptable to God was fully realized in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Jehovah-tsidkenu. In His person, character, and work as the suffering, righteous Servant of Jehovah, He was worthy to be substituted for Israel and for us. As the Righteous Branch of David He identified Himself with Israel and with us so that He could truly represent us before God, and that in Him it could be said we have truly met our obligations to God. Yet as Jehovah our Righteousness He is also distinct from us so as not to be involved in our guilt . . . He is himself the Righteous One . . . He is made righteousness to us . . . His righteousness is bestowed upon us as a free gift through faith . . . His righteousness is to set our feet on the path of righteousness in conformity to His will whose ways are all righteousness, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity" (Nathan J. Stone, *Names of God*, 107-109).

# **ENCOUNTER** – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

#### Jeremiah 23:1-8

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1 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the LORD. 3"I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. 4 I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD

- 5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch,
- a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.
- 6 In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety.
- *This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.*

7 "So then, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' 8 but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land."

### **EXAMINE** – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Circle "Woe" in v. 1.
- \* Circle "shepherds" in vv. 1, 2, 4.
- \* Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 2.
- \* Box "because" indicating reason in v. 2.
- \* Underline "bestowed" and "bestow" in v. 2.
- \* Circle "myself" in v. 3.
- \* Circle "remnant" in v. 3.

- \* Bracket "days are coming" in vv. 5, 7.
- \* Circle "Branch" in v. 5.
- \* Draw a line from "Judah" to "Israel" in v. 6.
- \* Highlight "The LORD Our Righteousness" in v. 6.
- \* Bracket "in his days" in v. 6.
- \* Box "so then" indicating result in v. 7.
- \* Box "but" indicating contrast in v. 8.

# day **EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help. 1. Verse 1 isn't about *literal* "shepherds" and *literal* "sheep." To whom do the two metaphors refer? 2. According to verse 2, these shepherds are responsible for scattering the sheep of God's pasture. How so? 3. According to verse 3, God is responsible for driving his flock into other countries. Resolve the apparent contradiction between verse 2 and verse 3.

4. Put what God promises to do in verse 3 in your own words.

5. Why "shepherds" (pl.) and not "a shepherd" (sing.) in verse 4?

6. Verse 5 isn't about a *literal* "Branch." To whom does the metaphor refer and what makes the figure so appropriate?

7. Explain the implicit *contrast* in verse 5. Who is being *contrasted* to whom?

8. Describe what verse 6 suggests about Judah and Israel "in his days."

9. Explain the two-fold significance of his name.

10. Discussion: Talk about the contrast in verse 10 and what it implies regarding Jeremiah's prophecy.

# day **B EXAMINE** – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Judah's last four kings were serious scoundrels. Saul, David, and Solomon had ruled over a united kingdom, but when Solomon died, the kingdom was divided ca. 931 B.C. The northern kingdom, called Israel, was ruled by nineteen kings before going into captivity in 722 B.C. The southern kingdom, called Judah, was ruled by nineteen kings and one queen before going into captivity in 586 B.C.

Josiah, who ruled from 641-609 B.C., was the last decent king Judah had, but when he was killed in battle, his reforms died with him. Eighteen years into Josiah's reign, Hilkiah, the high priest, discovered the book of the Law in the temple (2Ki 22:8-13). Its discovery led to widespread religious reforms throughout the land, including the renewal of the covenant of Moses (23:1-3) and the celebration of the Passover (23:21-23).

One writer describes Josiah's reforms this way: "All foreign cult objects were removed from the Temple, the city of Jerusalem, and throughout the land. The idolatrous priests were removed from their positions, and houses of religious prostitution were destroyed. Child-sacrifice to Molech in the Valley of Hinnom was abolished. Horses dedicated to the sun were removed from the entrance to the Temple, and their chariots were burned with fire. Finally, high places to false deities erected by Solomon just outside Jerusalem, apparently still in use, were razed (II Kings 23:4-14) . . . Perhaps the most significant feature of Josiah's reform was the observance of the Passover (II Kings 23:21-23; II Chron. 35:1-19). The record states that a Passover had not been kept as carefully since the days of Samuel the prophet. The original command of God had been to observe the feast with care annually, but the people had not obeyed. Josiah made sure the feast was kept properly this year" (Leon Wood, A Survey of Israel's History, 367-69). No wonder the Bible says of him, "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did-with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with the Law of Moses" (2Ki 23:25).

Josiah died in a failed attempt to cut off the Egyptian army en route to help the king of Assyria resist advancing Babylonian forces. Boldly Josiah marched to Megiddo to face Pharaoh Neco. Refusing to be dissuaded (2Chr 35:21), he disguised himself before engaging Pharaoh in battle. Tragically, "Archers shot King Josiah, and he told his officers, 'Take me away; I am badly wounded.' So they took him out of his chariot, put him in the other chariot he had and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died" (2Chr 35:23-24).

Jehoahaz (Shallum) succeeded Josiah and reigned only three months (Jer 22:10-12; 2Ki 23:30-33). Pharaoh Neco deported him to Egypt where he died. Jehoiakim (a.k.a. Eliakim) reigned for eleven years (Jer 22:13-23; 2Ki 23:34-24:6) and died in Jerusalem. He was followed by his son Jehoiachin (a.k.a. Jeconiah/Coniah) who reigned only three months (Jer 22:24-30; 2Ki 24:6-12). Nebuchadnezzar took him to Babylon where he eventually died. The last king of Judah was Zedekiah, who reigned eleven years and saw the kingdom and the Holy City destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 22:1-9; 2Ki 24:17-25:21). He was blinded and taken to Babylon to die. Jeremiah disclosed the truth about those four kings, but then he made a promise about the Messiah-the righteous Branch, who would one day reign and execute justice in the land.

Following a review of Judah's kings in Jeremiah 21-22, the prophet's message of judgment turns to one of hope and the promise of restoration for the nation and the dynasty of David. With regard to the structure of Jeremiah 23:1-8 one commentator writes: "The first section (vv. 1-4) continues the condemnation of the kings (shepherds) who have corrupted God's 'flock,' Israel, and refers to the future restoration of the nation from exile and the appointing of true 'shepherds' who would care for the flock. The short poetic piece (vv. 5-6; cf. 33:15-16) promises the coming of the ideal king, 'a Righteous Branch' of David's line who will rule wisely. Finally, a short prose piece (vv. 7-8) promises a new exodus but one of greater dimensions than the first" (Thompson, 486-87).

The first section reveals God's two-fold intention. On the one hand God intends to punish Judah's king and his officials for their inept, corrupt ways. Rather than responsibly watch over God's people, they were responsible for driving them into captivity. And since they did not deal kindly with his people, God would deal harshly with them. On the other hand, God intends to bring his people back to their land and put responsible shepherds over them. And while a remnant did return to the land following seventy years in captivity, that return did not entail all that is prophesied here. In the first place, that return did not occur in the days of the Davidic "Branch," and in the second place, that return hardly rivaled the exodus from Egypt. As one writer observes: "A remnant did return to Judah after the captivity, rebuild the temple, and restore national life. Jeremiah, however, promised a much greater regathering of the Jews–a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egypt (vv. 7-8; see 16:14-15). God will call His people from the nations of the world, gather them in their land, purge them, and then send them their promised Messiah (Jer. 30; Isa. 2:1-5; 4:1-6; 9:1-7; 11:1-12:6; Zech. 12-14)" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *Jeremiah*, BE, 119).

The short poetic piece describes the person who will rule over Judah and Israel in coming days. Figuratively speaking he is a righteous shoot from David's line, i.e., David's legitimate heir. Isaiah described this ruler in similar terms, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (11:1). In contrast to the pathetic kings that followed Josiah, this king will reign wisely and do what is just and right. In his day, Israel and Judah will be united rather than divided, and be ruled by one king. That king will be called "The LORD Our Righteousness." That is Messiah's name (cf., Isa 9:6-7). He is identified as Yahweh, and he will not only reflect the righteousness of God, but he will also convey that righteousness to his people.

The final short prose piece contrasts what people did say in the past with what they will say in the future. They did say, "As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt," but they will say, "As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them." The exodus will pale in comparison to what the Lord will do in coming days when Messiah rules over Israel and the nations.

The Message of the Passage Jesus, a righteous Branch of David, will reign as King over redeemed Israel and in that day be called "The Lord Our Righteousness."

# day **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

#### • Journal your answers to the following living questions:

-How is God making himself known to you?

-How does God want to change you?

-How is God calling you to change your world?



## **STUDY** – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **Woe** Like "buzz" and "hiss," the Heb. word is *onomatopoetic*, i.e., it sounds like its sense. The word introduces an oracle of judgment against Judah's rulers.

v. 1 *shepherds* "The shepherds are Judah's rulers, including King Zedekiah and the nobles who seem to have dominated him. But the term may be wider still and gather up a long list of inept, careless, and neglectful rulers for many years past. Certainly the last four kings of Judah were bad shepherds who caused the scattering of the sheep and brought about their dispersal. So the blame is attached to the rulers themselves" (Thompson, 487). "For all the influence that a king could have, the detailed handling of affairs naturally belonged to his subordinates, on whose honesty and diligence, or on the opposite of these things, hung the weal or woe–even the livelihood–of the ordinary citizen. These men, and the king, rather than the religious leaders, are what the Old Testament calls shepherds; and all history shows how strongly such office-bearers, high and low, are tempted to abuse their trust" (Derek Kidner, *The Message of Jeremiah*, TBST, 89).

v. 2 *bestowed, bestow* The Hebrew verb [*paqad*, watch over], which appears twice in this verse, has a range of possible meanings. "Translators have made some endeavor to relate the two usages here. Thus NEB translates: 'You have not watched over them, but I am watching you to punish you for your evil-doings.' The translation of John Bright attempts something similar: 'You have not attended to them . . . I am going to attend to you for your wicked deeds'" [see also ESV, NKJV, et.al.] (Thompson, 487); cf., "you have not taken care of them . . . I shall take care of you (NJB).

v. 3 *driven* "Here the scattering, ascribed to the shepherds in ver. 2, appears as God's act. God has scattered it, because under the guidance of its rulers it has proved unfaithful to Him" (C. Von Orelli, *The Prophecies of Jeremiah*, 172). "Although Judah's sins and the sins of their leaders had caused them to be 'driven . . . away' (v. 2) into exile, the Lord himself ultimately carried out the result of his people's repeated violations of their covenant commitments" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 23:3).

v. 3 *myself* "It is declared that the Lord Himself will make good what the bad shepherds had failed in. He will gather again His poor people from the dispersion, to which they had been driven, and place them under the rule of good shepherds, who will really care for their welfare (ver. 3f.)" (Von Orelli, 177-78). "But this very spectacle of bad shepherding makes God all the more determined, if we may put it so, to round up the scattered flock and find good shepherds for it, just as in Isaiah he had promised a regime where not only 'a king will reign in righteousness' but 'princes will rule in justice; each . . . like a hiding place from the wind, . . . like streams of water in a dry place'" (Kidner, 90).

v. 5 *days are coming* Cf., v. 7. This expression occurs 14 times in the NIV translation of Jeremiah (7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5, 7; 30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 33:14; 48:12; 49:2; 51:52). It "is very general and has no particular time reference. It is simply a way of calling attention to a solemn proclamation. The announcement concerns the ideal king (Messiah) of the Davidic line under whose just and victorious rule the dynastic hopes of Judah would be realized" (Thompson, 489).

v. 5 *righteous Branch* I.e., "righteous shoot" or "true shoot." The metaphor is of a shoot (*semah*) bursting forth from the Davidic tree (i.e., the dynasty), which, though cut off, is not dead. English versions have generally translated the word as Branch. In postexilic times the term became the classic technical one for the expected ideal king (Zech. 3:8; 6:12) . . . But there may well be another sense to the expression *semah saddiq*. Comparison with a very similar expression in Phoenician inscriptions and in Ugaritic texts suggests that the meaning may be 'legitimate scion'" (Thompson, 489). "David's 'family tree' might have been cut down, but a 'branch' (shoot) would grow from the stump and become Ruler of the nation (Isa. 11:1; 53:2)" (Wiersbe, 119). v. 6 *Judah, Israel* This verse implies Israel will be one nation under one king in messianic times (cf.,

31:3, 33; Eze 37:15-28).

v. 6 *the LORD* . . . "The name of this coming king will be the LORD Our Righteousness (*Yahweh sidqenu*). Unlike Zedekiah (*sidqiyahu*, 'my righteousness is Yahweh'), this coming king will live up to His name as Israel's righteous God" (Charles H. Dyer, "Jeremiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1158). The name "is perhaps doubly significant, for at one level its meaning is almost identical with that of Zedekiah ('righteousness of the Lord'), creating a pointed contrast to the current king, whose life so desperately belied his name. But in its own right it speaks of one who will not only reflect the righteousness of God but will convey it to his people, making it their own possession. Paul may have had this promise in mind when he spoke of 'Christ Jesus . . . our righteousness . . . ' (1 Cor. 1:30, cf. 2 Cor. 5:21)" (Kidner, 90)



Connect the **FAMILY**. Kids Kindergarten thru 6th grade receive Kid Pix tokens for discipleship activities completed during the week.

### **Family Talk**

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Making the right choice can mean the difference between life and death. In April of 1970, the astronauts who were in the Apollo 13 spacecraft found that to be true. They were supposed to land on the moon, but something in their ship went terribly wrong. On the third day of their mission a small explosion dashed their hopes of ever landing on the moon. In fact, they weren't sure if they would ever even make it home to earth. The fuel supply was low and the oxygen supply even lower. Success was dependent upon a small team of people on earth. The scientists began to come up with a plan that would use the little bit of fuel the ship had left to propel them toward earth and enter the atmosphere at just the right angle so they wouldn't burn up. The team knew that if they were 100% right. The lunar module safely splashed down into the Pacific Ocean. We serve a God who is always 100% right. Every decision He makes, every plan He has is ALWAYS right. We can trust Him with our family, our future, our finances, our plans. He will always do what's right because He is Righteousness. What does your family need to trust Him with today?

#### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Jer 23:1-8

 Who are the sheep God is talking about in verses 1 and 2?
 Who is the Righteous Branch in verse 5?
 Fill in the blank: "This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord our \_\_\_\_\_" (v. 6)

#### What Do You Think

Jesus is our Righteous Branch. When we trust Him as our Savior, we become righteous too. Does that mean we will always make the right choices 100% of the time? What do you do when you make a wrong choice?

#### What R U Going To Do

Trace your hand on a piece of paper and write the word RIGHT putting one letter on each finger. Write the following words on each finger corresponding to the correct letter: Right, Inspiring, Good, Helpful, True. Use these words when making choices to make the RIGHT one!

#### MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Personal God - Eternity - I believe in heaven, hell and one day Jesus will come again.

#### Memory Verse

Psalm 86:9 – All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O LORD; they will bring glory to your name.

I memorized CC	and Verse	<b>KIDPIX C</b> . Family complete		_ Think	Do
Child's name		Grade	_ Parent's signat	ture	
Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse. Questions: Kids@pantego.org					

# **30** CORE COMPETENCIES

### **10 CORE BELIEFS**

**Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14* I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** *Psalm 121:1-2* I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** *John 1:12* I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** *Ephesians* 4:15-16 I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** *John* 3:16 I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** *Psalm* 82:3-4 I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** *1 Timothy* 6:17-19 I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

### **10 CORE PRACTICES**

Worship *Psalm 95:1-7*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.
Prayer *Psalm 66:16-20*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.
Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** *Matthew* 6:33 I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Spiritual Gifts** *Romans* 12:4-6 I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes. Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world. **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians* 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians* 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** *Romans* 12:1 I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

#### **10 CORE VIRTUES** Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

**Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4* I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

**Self-Control** *Titus* 2:11-13 I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Humility** *Philippians* 2:3, 4 I choose to esteem others above myself.

**Love** *1 John 4:10-12* I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Patience** *Proverbs* 14:29 I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the

unavoidable pressures of life. Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Gentleness** *Philippians* 4:5 I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

#### **About the Authors**

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.