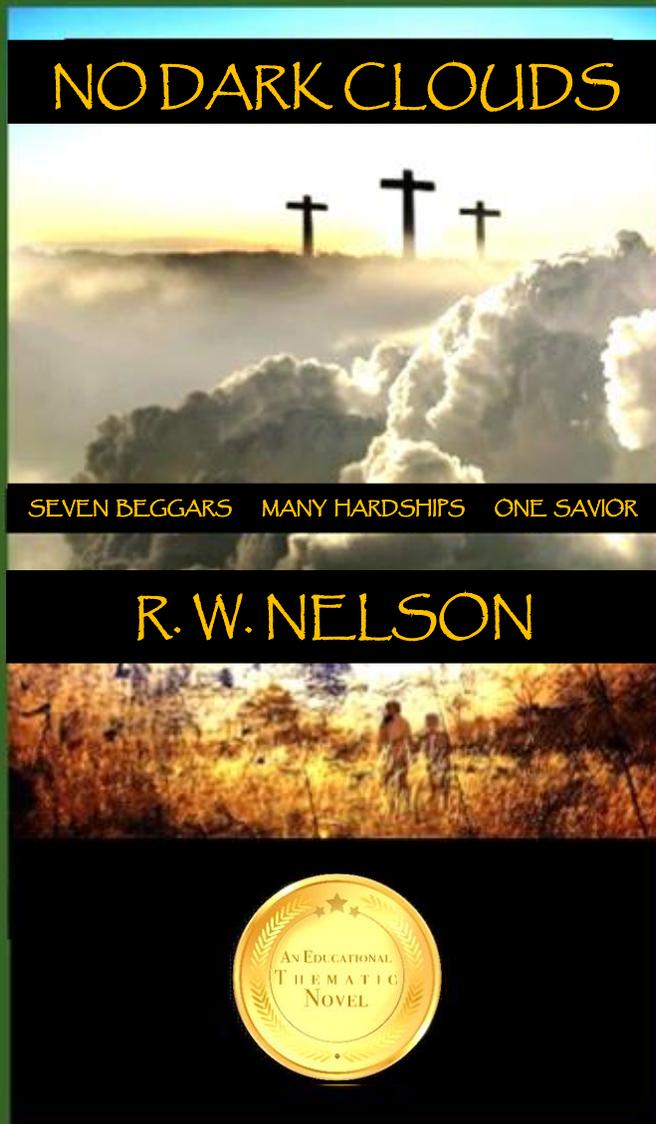


# Promotional Preview Booklet



*“An Educational  
Venture into the  
Realm of the Heart”*

- 20 Lesson Master Schedule
- 8 Educational Study Guides
- 6 'Personal Application' Lessons
- 8 Evangel-Topic Cards
- 14 Sign-a-pollooza 'Life Trait'  
Themes

Scripture Nuggets Template  
*(Bible verse analysis)*

Persanote Templates  
*(Character analysis)*

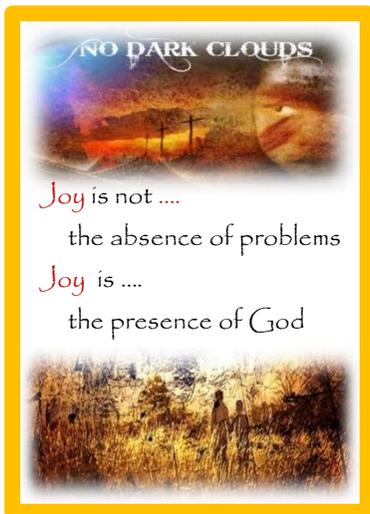
Personal Journal Template

Worksheets / Activities

Assessments

## *Thematic Unit Companion*



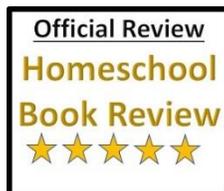


Our book club is reading it. So glad to tell you that your book is so inspiring. I'm taking my time to read it, just don't want it to end.

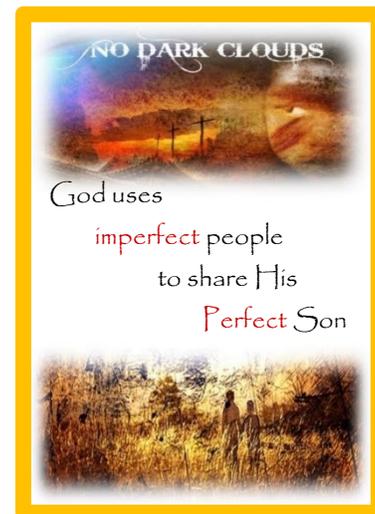
Tracy Norton  
Blanchard Book Club



The story includes the theme of friendship, which is shown by the beggar children's relationship with each other. I also liked the author's style of writing in a descriptive way. It made me feel like I was watching the story as a movie.

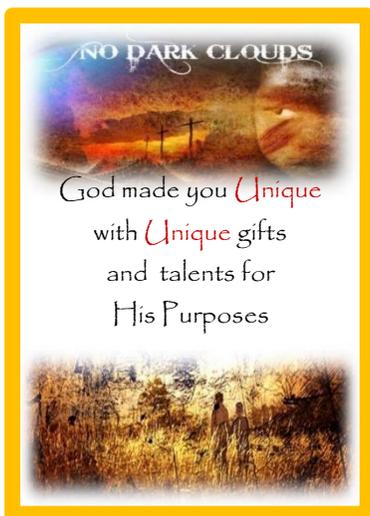


This book is good!! The engrossing story captures the attention from the very beginning, draws the reader directly into what is happening, and makes one truly feel the plight of these poor young people as they experience the life-changing power of Christ.



Oh, my word!! This book is a fabulous read!! My kids will love it. It needs to be made into a movie! Too many kids today don't even know what's in the Bible – this book makes it come alive!!

Judi Johnston Vankevich  
Speaker, educator, entertainer

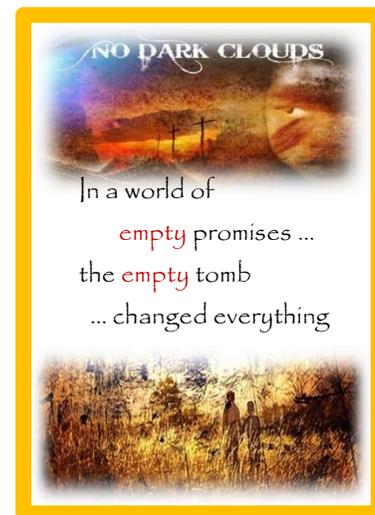


R.W. Nelson masterfully blends the Biblical account of Jesus' earthly ministry with a fictional narrative that is also grounded in an authentic context of ancient Roman history, geography, and culture.

Michael Roye  
Coach, teacher  
Grapevine Faith Christian School

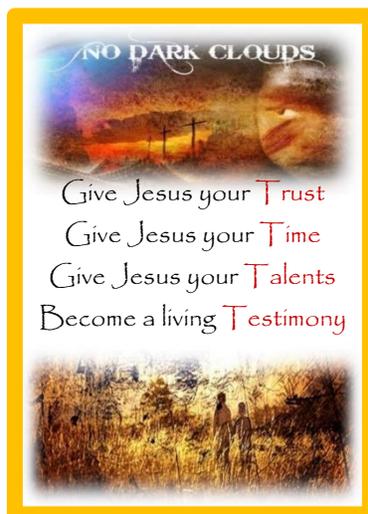


The author has been skillful in weaving the beggar children and the Roman centurions into the story. The reader feels empathetic towards the children, and thus this age-old story is enhanced. The reader must think about the inhumanity still in the world today, and think about the Man who suffered on the cross for our salvation.



R.W. Nelson has captured a dazzling picture of the past in this book. No Dark Clouds is a perfect, soul-touching account of the Bible, re-told from the viewpoint of street children and beggars.

Peace Johnson  
Online Book Club



**This promotional preview is not intended for retail sale.**

The richness and depth of the characters and storyline of *No Dark Clouds* has always had as its intent, to generate a greater interest in Scriptural knowledge and Biblical events for the reader (either individually or in the group classroom setting). The purpose of this preview booklet is to inform parents, school administrators, teachers, pastors, and interested parties how this unique fictional novel can be used as a teaching instrument. Though the enclosed material has copyright protection, permission is granted to duplicate all material set forth in this preview booklet, the complete Thematic Unit Companion and all of the pdf's located on the educational website: [www.nodarkclouds.com](http://www.nodarkclouds.com).

For the media/press kit, official reviews, gallery, book signings, speaking engagements, and latest information please visit the author's website: [www.rwnelson-author.com](http://www.rwnelson-author.com)

*No Dark Clouds*

Dedicated to the actual begging children in India whose real-life disabilities and struggles led to the foundational themes of this novel; and to worldwide support ministries such as Samaritan's Purse ([www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org)) and Operation Blessing ([www.ob.org](http://www.ob.org)) who strive to meet the needs of the orphaned, the homeless, and the impoverished.

For media inquiries, please contact: [nodarkclouds@pvmediagroup.net](mailto:nodarkclouds@pvmediagroup.net)

Preview copies for school principals, please contact: [admin@pvmediagroup.net](mailto:admin@pvmediagroup.net)

Business inquiries for Pax Veritas Media, LLC please contact: [paxveritas@pvmediagroup.net](mailto:paxveritas@pvmediagroup.net)

*No Dark Clouds* Copyright ©2018 R.W. Nelson Pax Veritas Media, LLC

ISBN: 978-0-692-08240-9 (Paperback) 978-0-692-14083-3 (Ebook)

Printed in the United States of America, First Edition 2018

Group discounts (35% 5 min.) please contact Pathway Book Service, [pbs@pathwaybook.com](mailto:pbs@pathwaybook.com)  
'Look Inside' Free Read: [www.amazon.com/No-Dark-Clouds-R-W-Nelson/dp/0692082409/](http://www.amazon.com/No-Dark-Clouds-R-W-Nelson/dp/0692082409/)

Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation used by permission.

[www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)

 *Enclosed In Preview*

## Table of Contents

- I. The 5 E's of Teaching Fictional Novels in the Classroom 
- II. 20 Lesson (4 Week) Master Schedule 
- III. Educational Study Guides w/ worksheets
  - a. The Ministry of Angels
  - b. Heaven: What is it Really Like
  - c. The 'Names' of God in Scripture 
  - d. The Messianic Prophecies in Scripture
  - e. The Miracles of Jesus
  - f. The Tabernacle of Moses 
  - g. The 'I am' Statements of Jesus
  - h. The Beatitudes 
- IV. Personal Application Lessons
  - a. God Made You Unique
  - b. Dealing with Fear and Anger
  - c. Handling Conflicts with Others
  - d. When Really Bad Things Happen 
  - e. What You Say Matters
  - f. Building Your Reputation
- V. Bible Reference Passages 
- VI. Sign-a-poolooza 'Life Trait' Themes
- VII. Evangel-Topic Cards 
- VIII. Classroom Templates
  - a. Scripture Nuggets 
  - b. Persanotes – Fictional Characters
  - c. Persanotes – Begging Children
  - d. Personal Reading Journal 
- IX. Classwork Activities
  - a. Crossword 1 – Characters w/answers
  - b. Crossword 2 – Bible History w/answers
  - c. Word Searches and Scrambles w/answers
- X. Assessments
- XI. Extended Book Description 
- XII. About the Author 

# The 5 E's of Teaching Fictional Novels as a Thematic Unit in the Classroom

By R.W. Nelson

## Entertain

Be passionate – don't 'preach'  
Be a performance – not a 'pickle'  
Be a participant – not a lecturer

## Engage

Sign-a-pollooza  
Literature Circles  
Socratic Seminars  
Persanotes

## Educate

Educational Study Guides  
Personal Reading Journals  
Bible Reference Passages  
Assessments

## Edify

Personal Application Lessons  
Scripture Nuggets  
Sign-a-pollooza

## Evangelize

Evangel-Topic Cards  
Personal Reading Journals

# Suggested Master Teaching Schedule

Lesson	Chapter(s) Read	# Pages	Study Guides	Per App. Lesson	Evangel Topics	Scr. Nuggets
1	<i>Introduction / Template Training / Pre-read PPT / Interactive Components - read Prologue</i>					
2	1 & 2	24		<b>PA4</b>		
3	3	12	<b>SG8</b>		<b>ET1</b>	<b>SN</b>
4	4	15				
5	5	14	<b>SG5</b>			<b>SN</b>
6	6	11		<b>PA6</b>	<b>ET2</b>	
7	7 & 8	19	<b>SG1</b>			<b>SN</b>
8	9	14	<b>SG2</b>			<b>SN</b>
9	10 & 11	18			<b>ET3</b>	
10	12	13		<b>PA2</b>		<b>SN</b>
11	13	14			<b>ET4</b>	
12	14	13		<b>PA5</b>		
13	15	13	<b>SG4</b>			<b>SN</b>
14	16	11	<b>SG6</b>		<b>ET5</b>	<b>SN</b>
15	17	11			<b>ET6</b>	
16	18	11		<b>PA3</b>		
17	19	10	<b>SG3</b>		<b>ET7</b>	<b>SN</b>
18	20	12	<b>SG7</b>			<b>SN</b>
19	21	12		<b>PA1</b>	<b>ET8</b>	
20	Assessments / Journals / Scripture Nuggets / Persanotes					

Inspired by the author's two-year observation of the struggles and disabilities of India's beggar children, No Dark Clouds is a unique Christian fiction intertwining the lives of seven beggar children in Biblical Jerusalem with historical figures of the time, including Jesus.

The novel brings forth the raw emotions of what a personal encounter with Jesus might have been like for a youth living in Biblical Israel at the time of Christ. The story also gives the reader a possible glimpse of the lives of those who found themselves caught up in the Passion Week, trial, and crucifixion: people such as a slave, a Roman soldier, a Pharisee, Barabbas and King Herod. This fictional account takes the reader to Jerusalem on Resurrection Sunday, where he or she experiences the life-changing effects of that day in the lives of Pilate, his wife Claudia, the Disciples, Cleopas, and even the High Priest Caiaphas.

Beggar Boy and his companions all bear a form of disability. For him, five scars inflicted by a cruel man are etched across his face, rendering him an outcast. He has no home and no guardians to take care of him. At ten years of age, he has to beg and steal to survive. His friends are controlled by Taskmaster whose income is derived from the children's begging. Aditya, the oldest at fourteen years of age, is also one of the shortest beggars. Her disability (similar to that of dwarfism), forces her to sing in the marketplaces in order to survive.

The beggar friends grow up in a tumultuous Israel. The Zealots (led by Barabbas) threaten rebellion while the Romans (led by Pilate) are focused on squashing any type of revolt. In the midst of all of this, Jesus continues with his ministry and carrying out miraculous healings, even in the midst of constant rejection and persecution from the Pharisees and Sadducees. In particular, one of the stories that appears is that of the centurion (Darius) who pleads with Jesus to heal his servant (Favian). Another miracle is that of the blind man who is healed by Jesus smearing mud in the blind man's eyes.

By saving the life of a centurion (Leonidas) during an ambush by Barabbas, Beggar Boy is 'rewarded' by being allowed to live and work within the Roman Fortress Antonia. This also provides a way for him to steal food from the granary and distribute it to his beggar friends. A major task for the boy is the carrying and administering of vinegar wine to criminals being crucified on a cross.

When Beggar Boy learns (then verifies) that a 'Healer-Man' has healed two of his beggar friends (one from deafness, the other from deformity in the arms and legs), he sets out by leaving Jerusalem to find this man (Jesus) in the hopes of being healed of his knife-scarred face. However, Jesus is in the Holy City for the Last Supper, Gethsemane, His trial, and crucifixion.

Beggar Boy returns to the Roman fortress only to find out that a crucifixion for three criminals will take place soon at Golgotha. Grabbing his javelin and vinegar wine, he hurriedly departs to Golgotha to administer vinegar wine to the criminals. A climactic encounter unfolds when Beggar Boy arrives at Calvary only to realize that it is the 'Healer-Man' who is being crucified. The boy had wanted Jesus to heal his scarred face, but Jesus needed the boy to give Him vinegar wine instead. The boy experiences 'spirit-crushing' disappointment and betrayal by his own Roman caretakers.

The uniqueness of No Dark Clouds is that it includes Biblical study material embedded within the storyline as experienced by the characters. It truly is an educational venture into the 'realm of the heart.' The topics include: The ministry of angels; Heaven, what is it really like; the 'names' of God in Scripture; Messianic prophecies; the miracles of Jesus; the Tabernacle of Moses; the 'I am' statements of Jesus; and the 'Beatitudes' of Jesus. Though many novels and motion pictures end at the crucifixion, No Dark Clouds follows the lives of the characters from the crucifixion, to the Resurrection, to the Ascension, and beyond. The 'empty tomb' profoundly impacts not only the beggar children, but the Jewish religious leaders, the Romans, and Jesus' disciples and followers.

A key fictional character is Mishea, a twenty-year-old Ethiopian slave who is the royal tutor for the Roman children in Jerusalem. She becomes the 'mother figure' for the beggar children, and is the first to understand Messianic Scriptures from the book of Isaiah.

'Life-trait' themes of the characters abound within the novel including: God made you unique, reputation matters, judge someone from within, true love can conquer darkness, and everyone has God-given gifts. No Dark Clouds offers readers a unique blend of Biblical history, geography, Bible references, and Christian doctrine, all wrapped around the profound story of a beggar boy and his search for and encounter with Jesus.

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

©2018 R.W. Nelson

www.nodarkclouds.com

SG3

The 'Names' of God in Scripture

SG3

Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM "; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM (*ehyeh: Yahweh*) has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:13,14

In Biblical times, names were not only used to identify a person but represented much more. Ancient names gave a description of the bearer's characteristics, qualities, insights into their nature, traits, and personalities. For example, when Jacob (meaning '*grasping the heel*') had an encounter with God in Genesis 32; his name was changed to Israel (meaning '*struggled with God*'). The nation of Israel has 'struggled with God' ever since. Jesus changed Simon's name to the Aramaic name Cephas (meaning '*the rock*'). In English the name is Peter, identifying the Apostle as one who was to be a leader of the early Church.

If names were very important in describing people, which is the best name used to describe God? The answer: it is impossible to describe the qualities (the very being) of God in one, even two words. Some Biblical scholars believe there are 116 names that identify who God is in the Old Testament, while other sources say there are 72 names of God. When you add the New Testament names (mostly in Greek) there are an additional 105 names of God. Regardless of how many descriptors, naming God is and was a monumental (but enriching) task.

## ***Elohim***

The very first verse in the Bible used the word '*Elohim*' for God. It is used 2599 times in the Old Testament and is a plural word. "In the beginning, God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth," (Genesis 1:1). The name basically means, "the God of strength and power." By speaking, *Elohim* became the Creator of the universe. Only *Elohim* could create something when there was nothing to start with. One of the foundational verses of Christianity is Genesis 1:26; "Then God (*Elohim*) said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." The name of God (*Elohim*) may have been on John's mind when he profoundly started his Gospel in the New Testament by using 'Word' (in Greek) as a name for Jesus:

“In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God (*Theos*), and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:1-3)

When your life seems ‘powerless’ or you lack strength to carry on: call upon the Creator ‘*Elohim*’ (the God of strength and power) to strengthen you.

### ***‘EI’ -***

The term ‘*EI*’ which is related to ‘*Elohim*’ is used as part of a compound word to name and describe God. There are 31 distinct uses of ‘*EI*’ in the Old Testament, usually used in referencing a specific name for God while interacting with people. One such example is ‘El-Olam’ and another ‘El-Shaddai’.

### ***El-Olam***

First used in Genesis 21:33, it is mentioned 439 times in the Bible. It means ‘*The Everlasting God*’ and identifies Him as eternal and existing before time and space. Olam comes from the Hebrew root word implying ‘eternity’. “From everlasting to everlasting, You are God (*El-Olam*),” (Psalms 90:2). It is interesting to note that the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament wrote, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever,” (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus is also given the name, “The Alpha and the Omega” (the beginning and the end) in Revelation 1. If you are uncertain as to your future or do not know which way to turn, remember that God has always existed – always was – and always will be; call upon ‘*El-Olam*’ to guide you as you venture ahead.

### ***El-Shaddai***

First used in Genesis 17:1,2; it is mentioned 48 times in Scripture. The name means ‘*Lord God Almighty*’. Abraham was ninety-nine years old and his wife (Sarah) was ninety. God told him that He was going to make a covenant with him and was going to start by allowing the married couple to have a son. “I am Almighty God (*El-Shaddai*) . And I will make a covenant between Me and you.” Abraham, because of their ages, laughed at the proclamation believing it to be impossible for Sarah to have a child. As a result, God told him that the son’s name was going to be Isaac (meaning ‘*he laughs*’). In the Gospels, four times Jesus says that “all things are possible with God.” When you get to the point in your life that things appear to be impossible, call upon ‘*El-Shaddai*’ to change the impossible to the realm of the possible.

### Other examples of 'El' -

- El-Elyon (The Most High God) (42x) Genesis 14:18
- El-Qanna (Jealous God) (6x) Exodus 20:5
- El-Roi (The God Who Sees) Genesis 16:13
- El-Echad (The One God) Malachi 2:10
- El-Elohey Israel (God, God of Israel)

### Adonai

A name for God first used in Genesis 15:2 when Abram addressed Him. It is mentioned 434 times in the Scripture and is a plural word. The singular word *Adon* means 'Lord, Master, Owner,' a name referring to majesty, respect, and a royal title. Bible encyclopedias refer to *Adonai* as signifying that God is Sovereign and does not answer to anyone other than Himself. "O Lord God (*Adonai*), You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?" (Deuteronomy 3:24). Synonyms for sovereignty include supremacy, dominance, and preeminence. Thus, I encourage you to frequently pay tribute to '*Adonai*' in your prayer time, lifting up the name of God who is Sovereign and above all others.

### *Emmanuel (or Immanuel)*

The word means '*God With Us*' and is mentioned three times in the Bible. It is first used in Scripture as part of a Messianic prophecy that is the cornerstone of Christianity: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and will call his name *Immanuel*," (Isaiah 7:14). God leaves the glory of the Throne room in Heaven and enters the human race humbly as a child in order to (ultimately) reunite sinful man to a Holy God. The last words Jesus tells His disciples before returning to the Throne in Heaven are "I am with you always, even to the end of the age," (Matthew 28:20). As a child of God (John 1:12) when you are in the depths of loneliness or despair, call upon '*Emmanuel*.'

### *Yahweh / YHWH / LORD / Jehovah*

This is the most common name for God in the Bible and is used almost 7,000 times. It comes from the Hebrew word meaning 'to be' or 'to exist'. It implies '*God is our Lord and Master*,' and was first used in Genesis 2:4. The Hebrew language has twenty-two consonants, and vowels are used as dots and short line markings. Jewish history records that this name of God was considered to be so holy (that out of reverence), His name was not to be mentioned or pronounced. Thus, this name of God is simply - *YHWH* - with no vowels for pronunciation. It is also the only proper name of God according to Hebrew scholars.

For semantic purposes, Old Testament scribes converted *YHWH* into a two-syllable word (with vowels) as *Yahweh*. Then, starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century (A.D.) Jewish scholars combined the vowels of *Adonai* to *YHWH* which created the name '*Jehovah*', giving the readers of the Bible a pronounced description for this name of God. When the King James Version of the Bible was translated into English (1604-1611), the scholars consistently used *Jehovah* for *YHWH/Yahweh*, resulting in most English translations using '*Jehovah*' for the better part of the next four hundred years.

Just as '*El*' was used in a compound word, *Yahweh/Jehovah* is also used as compound word combinations to name God. Two such examples are *Jehovah-Raah* and *Jehovah-Rapha*.

### ***Jehovah-Raah (Rohi)***

This word combination is used for the name of God in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and means "*The Lord is my Shepherd*". As a psalm of David (a former shepherd as a youth), it gives the implication that God cares, feeds, and protects His people (sheep). When sheep wander away, the shepherd draws them back into the herd. The duty of every shepherd is to lead and guide. Jesus Himself said that He was the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). During those times when you wander away or seemingly become lost, call upon '*Jehovah-Raah*' to guide you back.

### ***Jehovah-Rapha (Rophe)***

Since this name of God is a cornerstone plot of *No Dark Clouds*, it should be addressed in this study guide. It means '*The Lord Heals*' and comes from the name of God in Exodus 15. After Moses led Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, the nation wandered in the wilderness of Sinai. When they arrived at a place called Marah (Exodus 15:23) the water was so bitter it was unusable. God told Moses to throw a tree into the water, and as it entered the water, God would 'heal' it and make it clean to drink and use. Then, God told Israel that if they obeyed Him (15:26), He would be their Healer. If you need emotional, spiritual, or physical healing, call upon '*Jehovah Rapha*' to give you healing.

### ***Other Yahweh/Jehovah word combinations***

- |                     |                              |                  |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| • Jehovah-Jireh     | (The Lord Will Provide)      | Genesis 22:14    |
| • Jehovah-Shalom    | (The Lord is Peace)          | Judges 6:24      |
| • Jehovah-M'Kaddesh | (The God Who Sanctifies)     | Leviticus 20:7,8 |
| • Jehovah-Nissi     | (The Lord is my Banner)      | Exodus 17:8-15   |
| • Jehovah-Sabaoth   | (The Lord of Hosts) (285x)   | 1 Samuel 1:3     |
| • Jehovah-Tsidkenu  | (The Lord our Righteousness) | Jer 23:6,33:16   |
| • Jehovah-Shammah   | (The Lord is There)          | Ezekiel 48:35    |

## New Testament names of God / Jesus

In the New Testament, all but two names of God are written in Greek. Those other two were written in Aramaic. Jesus, in teaching His disciples how to pray (*The Lord's Prayer*), used the Aramaic word 'Abba' to describe God the Father. It simply means 'daddy'. "Our Father (*Abba*) who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name," (Matthew 6:9). The other instance was when Christ (in agony) was on the cross and He says in Aramaic: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani,," (My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, Matthew 27:46) It is interesting to note that Paul told us to also pray to our 'Daddy': "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15). If you are living in fear or anxiety and just need a hug from your 'heavenly daddy', call upon *Abba* to comfort you.

The most common name for God in the New Testament is '*Theos*' and it is used 1,343 times describing both Jesus and God the Father. Another name for God/Jesus is '*kyrios (or kurios)*' meaning 'Lord'. It is used 748 times. The word comes from the Greek root word '*kuros*' and literally means '*supremacy or supreme in authority*'. For the first three hundred years of the early Church, only Caesar could be declared '*kyrios*' (supreme or god-like). When they began using the word to describe Jesus as the true 'supreme in authority,' the young Church became a threat to the entire Roman empire.

"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord (*kyrios*)," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Thousands upon thousands of Christians from the early Church gave their life declaring Jesus as the 'supreme' (*kyrios*) Son of God. Along with the many other names of God/Jesus from both the Old and New Testaments, if you ever decide to do an in-depth study of 'The Names of God', there are many resources that have already been prepared for such studies. One thing is for sure, if you ever partake in a comprehensive study of the names of God, you will most certainly be blessed and gain valuable insight into the Scripture and who God is.

### Some New Testament names identifying Christ as God

- |                          |            |                     |             |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| • The Son of the Highest | Luke 1:32  | The True God        | 1 John 5:20 |
| • God my Savior          | Luke 1:47  | Emanuel             | Matt 1:23   |
| • The Lord of Glory      | 1 Cor 2:8  | I Am                | John 8:58   |
| • Creator of all things  | Col 1:16   | First and the Last  | Rev 1:17    |
| • Wisdom of God          | 1 Cor 1:24 | Brightness of Glory | Heb 1:3     |
| • Seed of David          | Rom 1:3    | Savior of the world | 1 John 4:14 |
| • Lamb of God            | John 1:29  | Root of David       | Rev 5:5     |
| • Door of the sheep      | John 10:7  | The True Vine       | John 15:1   |
| • Bread of Life          | John 6:35  | Chief Cornerstone   | 1 Pet 2:6   |

Scripture Nuggets:

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.”  
Proverbs 18:10

O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed  
Your splendor above the heavens!” Psalms 8:1

“Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of  
the LORD, our God.” Psalm 20:7

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in  
their midst." Matthew 18:20

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a  
righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and  
righteousness in the land. “In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell  
securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, “The LORD our  
righteousness.” Jeremiah 23:5,6

Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace.”  
Judges 6:24

“Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forever.” Psalm 113:2

“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND  
LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:16

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,  
even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12

## The 'Names' of God in Scripture

1. The very first verse in the Bible used the word '*Elohim*' for God. It is used 2,599 times in the Old Testament and is a  word.
2. One of the foundational verses of Christianity is Genesis 1:26; "Then God (*Elohim*) said, "Let  make man in  image, according to  likeness."
3. When your life seems 'powerless' or you lack strength to carry on: call upon the Creator '*Elohim*' (the God of ) to strengthen you.
4. First used in Genesis 21:33, El-Olam is mentioned 439 times in the Bible. It means '' and identifies Him as eternal and existing before time.
5. When you get to the point in your life that things appear to be impossible, call upon '' to change the impossible to the realm of the possible.
6. Bible encyclopedias refer to *Adonai* as signifying that God is  and does not answer to anyone other than Himself.
7. The word  means '*God With Us*' and is first used in Scripture as part of a Messianic prophecy that is the cornerstone of Christianity – Isaiah 7:14.
8.  is the most common name for God in the Bible and is used almost 7,000 times. It implies '*God is our Lord and Master*,'
9. Jehovah-Raah: means '*The Lord is my Shepherd*,' and Jesus Himself said that He was the '' in John 10:11.
10. Jehovah-Rapha It means '' and comes from the name of God in Exodus 15.

11. Jesus in teaching His disciples how to pray (*The Lord's Prayer*), He used the Aramaic word '  ' to describe God the Father. It simply means  .

12. The most common name for God in the New Testament is '  ' and it is used 1,343 times describing both Jesus and God the Father.

13. Thousands upon thousands of Christians from the early Church gave their life declaring Jesus as the '  ' (*kyrios*) Son of God.

14. "The name of the LORD is a  ; The  into it and is safe." Proverbs 18:10

15. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who  in His name." John 1:12

'Contemplationitis': Of all the 'names of God' in this lesson, which one name meant something special to you. Explain your answer.

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

©2018 R.W. Nelson

www.nodarkclouds.com

SG6

The Tabernacle of Moses

SG6

Exodus 25-27; 30-31; 35-40; Hebrews 8:1-7 9:23-28

“Who serve a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the Tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain.” *Hebrews 8:5*

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. And behold the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.” *Matthew 27:50,51*

To understand the Holy Temple in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus, it is important to have knowledge of the Tabernacle of Moses, which became the prototype of future Temple structures. After Moses led the children of Israel out of bondage from Egypt, the nation spent one year at Mt. Sinai. On the mountain, God gave him the Ten Commandments and very detailed instructions to construct the Tabernacle (which was to be the place where God was to dwell with His people) and offer us a ‘blueprint’ or ‘pattern’ that reveals God’s love toward us through the life of Jesus Christ.

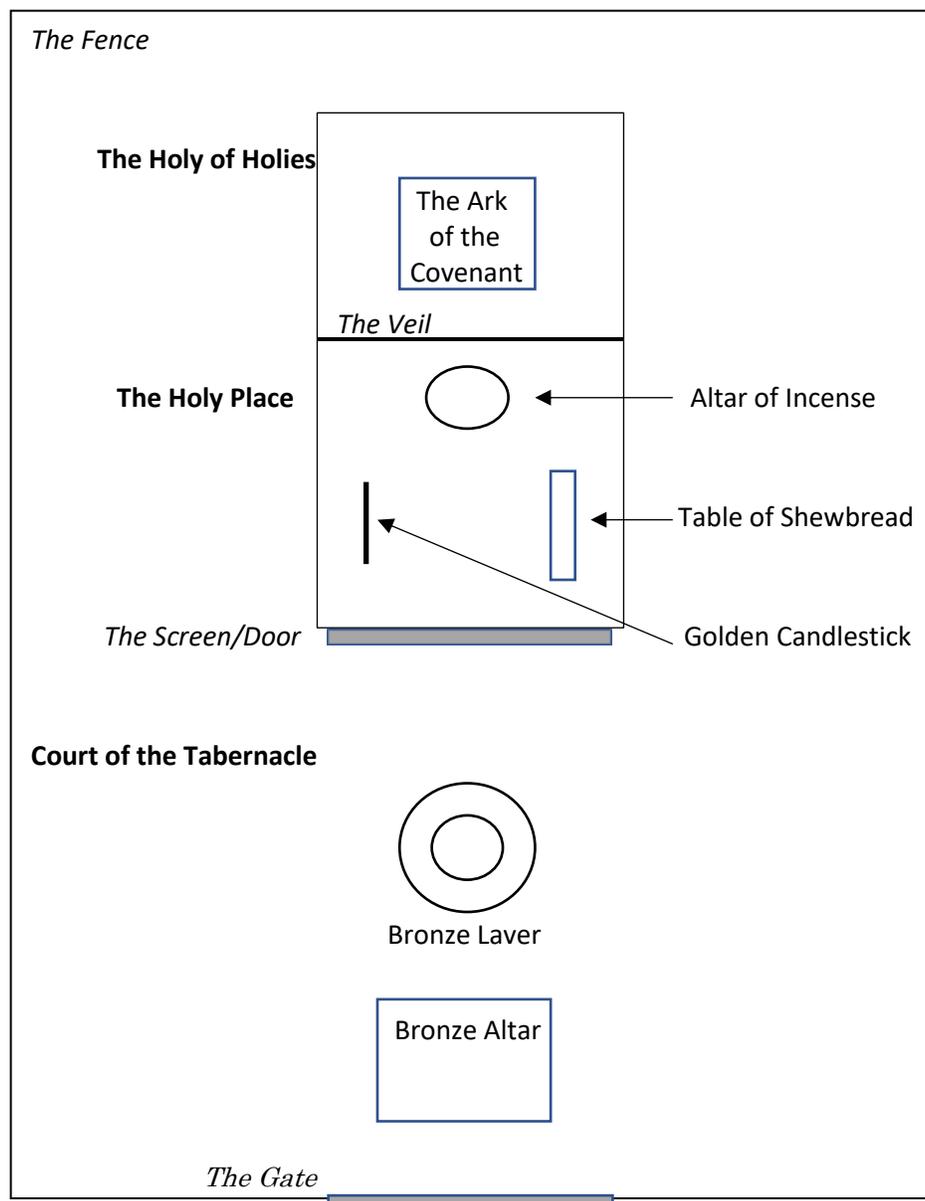
Everything about the Tabernacle revealed God’s plan for salvation and how sinful man would be able to have an intimate relationship with a Holy God. Every minute detail had meaning and purpose. There were fourteen different kinds of material used to create and build it. The colors, numbers, measurements, materials, animal skins, furniture, precious metals, designs – everything God directed Moses to build and create had eternal significance.

For example, the ‘fence’ (100 cubits x 50 cubits) separated the Tabernacle from the outside Godless world. There was only one way into the Courtyard (through a series of curtains called the Gate – *Jesus is the way*); only one way into the Holy Place (a series of curtains called the Screen or Door – *Jesus is the truth*); and only one way into the Holy of Holies (a curtain called The Veil – *Jesus is the life, John 14:6*) It was in the Holy of Holies where humanity (High Priest) met and had fellowship with God.

## The Tabernacle:

- The place where God was to dwell with His people
- Revealed that the holiness of God needed to be separated from the sinfulness of humanity
- The 'earthly' Tabernacle is but a 'shadow' of the one in Heaven
- Revealed a specific 'pattern' that needed to be followed to have an intimate personal relationship with God
- Illuminated prophetically the ministry and teachings of Jesus

### *The Tabernacle of Moses*



### **The Colors**

Gold – holiness, purity  
Blue – heavenly, divine  
Purple – royalty, suffering  
Scarlet – sacrifice, blood  
White – purity,  
righteousness

### **The Coverings**

Badger's skin  
Rams skin (dyed red)  
Goats Hair  
Fine woven cotton

### **The Materials**

Gold – holiness, purity  
Silver – redemption  
Bronze – God's judgement  
and examination  
Acacia wood – Jesus'  
humanity

### **The Furniture**

Altar of Burnt Offering – acacia wood overlaid with bronze / the grating – pure bronze (*Exodus 27:1-8*)

Bronze Laver – completely made of bronze with mirrors holding spring water (*Exodus 30:17-21*)

Golden Lampstand – solid gold providing the only light in the Holy Place (*Exodus 25:31-40*)

Table of Shewbread – acacia wood overlaid with gold (*Exodus 25:23-30*)

Altar of Incense – acacia wood overlaid with gold (*Exodus 30:1-10*)

Ark of the Covenant – acacia wood overlaid with gold/  
Mercy Seat and Cherubim – pure gold (*Exodus 25:10-22*)

### Altar of Burnt Offering (Bronze Altar)

Upon entering the courtyard of the Tabernacle, the first piece of 'furniture' was the sacrificial altar. Animal sacrifices were offered on the altar and the blood of the animals were sprinkled on the four brass horns by the attending priests. The significance of being bronze is that it represented God's judgement and/or examination. The first 'step' to having an intimate personal relationship with God is to understand that "*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin,*" *Hebrews 9:22*. Thus, upon entering the Tabernacle, the animal sacrifices became the 'substitute sacrifice' for our sinfulness. Christ was crucified and paid the penalty for sin and became that sacrifice in our place. Even in the later Temples of Jerusalem, everyone who wanted to approach God had to bring a sacrificial offering to the Altar. An important note is that the fire for the burnt offerings were never allowed to go out and the first fire was lit from Heaven. (Leviticus 6:5,6)

### *Scripture nuggets:*

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20

“Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”  
Romans 12:1

### Bronze Laver

Before the Levitical priests could enter the Holy Place, they were required to wash their hands and their feet. Failure to do so would result in instant death upon entering. It was necessary to be symbolically cleansed and pure to enter God’s presence. This task was performed daily by the priests. It is necessary for us to be ‘cleansed daily’ if we are to have a proper communion with God living out the life of sanctification (GK: *hagiosmos* – ‘being set apart’). Inside the basin portion of the laver were mirrors and the priests were instructed to only use spring water.

#### *Scripture nuggets:*

“If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:8,9

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5

### The Tabernacle Structure

The actual Tabernacle consisted of a ‘structure’ made up of acacia wood planks overlaid with gold, intermixed with a series of curtains and furniture. The first room was the Holy Place and then the Holy of Holies (separated by the Veil). It is significant to note that there is no solid top to it but is underneath four different types of coverings: Badger’s skin on the outside; then rams’ skin dyed red; then woven goats’ hair; then the innermost covering were ten fine linen curtains embroidered with colorful cherubim. From the outside, the Tabernacle looked dull and unappealing (the badger’s skin). But when the priests moved inside the Holy Place, they saw a rich variety of colors and furniture overlaid with pure gold. To the outside world, the Christian life may seem dull and unappealing, but to many who follow Jesus, their lives have an inner beauty that the world does not (and cannot) understand.

### The Holy Place

This is the first enclosed area of the Tabernacle. This room symbolizes living, worship, and service that is ‘set apart’ from sin to serve God. The five pillars of acacia

wood overlaid with gold at the entrance is the first instance God commanded Moses to use gold (representing holiness and the righteousness of God). This room consisted of the Golden Lampstand, the Table of Shewbread, and the Altar of Incense.

### The Table of Shewbread

Every seven days the priests placed twelve loaves of bread (always on the Sabbath day) on the table. Then the old bread served as food (for only those priests who served God inside the Holy Place). To the nation of Israel in the wilderness, this represented gratitude to God for supplying their daily bread as they were dependent upon Him for food. Each morning in the deserts of Sinai, God provided the nation with manna (the bread of angels, Exodus 16) to give them nourishment. To the Christian, this represents our dependence upon Jesus (and His Word) for our spiritual nourishment.

#### *Scripture nuggets:*

“Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst.” John 6:35

“But He answered and said, “It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4

### Golden Candlestick (Lampstand)

This piece of furniture was opposite the Table of Shewbread and is the only piece of furniture completely made of solid gold. It held seven lamps on top of six almond branches, each with bowls (almond blossoms) having a wick and oil for burning. This was the only light source in the Holy Place. The candlestick represented more than just physical light, but ‘enlightenment’ for those who come to God in holiness. Numerous times in Scripture oil was used to symbolize the Holy Spirit.

#### *Scripture nuggets:*

“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

“This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” 1 John 1:5

“And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:5

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” John 14:6

## Altar of Incense

Representing prayerful worship, this was the third piece of furniture in the Holy Place and was positioned directly in front of the Veil that separated the room and the Holy of Holies. On top of the Altar was a golden plate where the incense was burned morning and evening (continuously) surrounded by a golden wreath signifying the need for the child of God to be in perpetual prayer, praise, and worship. It is our duty to honor God with thanksgiving and worship. The attending priests would take coals from the Bronze Altar for the incense to burn and it was described as a perfume of sweet smelling aromas. The importance of this piece of furniture and its purpose is that it was directly before the Veil, the nearest thing to the Holy of Holies. It should also be noted that this Altar had four horns made of gold, whereas the four horns on the 'outside' Altar in the Courtyard were made of bronze.

### *Scripture nuggets:*

“And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” Ephesians 5:2

“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!” Psalms 150:6

“O magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt His name together.” Psalms 34:3

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## The Veil

This curtain 'veiled' the immediate presence of God from the officiating priests in the Holy Place. It was beautifully colored (blue, scarlet, purple) and embroidered with white Cherubim. The curtain hung just behind four golden pillars with silver bases. (In comparison, the five pillars of gold at the 'Door' in front of the Holy Place had bronze bases). In the Tabernacle of the wilderness, only Moses and the High Priest (Aaron) could enter the Holy of Holies through the Veil. Thereafter in the Jewish Temples of Jerusalem, only the High Priest could enter through the Veil, and that was only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

## The Holy of Holies – Ark of the Covenant

The divine presence of God was in this inner chamber. As the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he offered up the sins of the people by sprinkling the blood of the sacrificed lamb on top of the Mercy Seat. As God looked upon the blood, His 'seat of judgement' became a 'seat of mercy'. Thus, by the grace of God, a covering for the sins of the people was satisfied. In this room there were no golden candlesticks – God Himself was the Light.

Basically, the Ark of the Covenant was a golden box. Inside the Ark were three items: Ten Commandments – Exodus 20:1-17 (representing obedience to God’s commandment and laws); Aaron’s staff/rod – Numbers 17:1-12 (representing obedience to God’s authority); and a pot of manna – Exodus 16:32-34 (representing obedient surrender and/or fellowship). Over the golden box and at each end of the Mercy Seat (also called the Atonement Cover), were two golden cherubim. In heaven the actual cherubim were the guardians of the very habitation of God and His throne. As these two golden cherubim spread their wings over the Mercy Seat, their eyes were focused upon the golden cover where the atoning blood would be splattered. Thus, their gaze was not upon the High Priest but upon the blood of the sacrifice. Today we are able to approach God because He is focusing on the blood of Jesus that was shed and not our sinfulness.

*Scripture nuggets:*

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrew 4:14-16

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, this is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:19-22

The Tabernacle of Moses

1. Label the parts and furniture of the Tabernacle with the Word Bank listed below.

The diagram shows the layout of the Tabernacle. At the top is the Holy of Holies (J) containing the Ark of the Covenant (E). Below it is the Holy Place (A) containing the Golden Candlestick (G), the Table of Shewbread (I), and the Bronze Laver (D). The outer court (H) contains the Bronze Altar (B) and the Table of Shewbread (L). The entire structure is supported by pillars (K) and has a roof (F).

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.
- F.
- G.
- H.
- I.
- J.
- K.
- L.
- M.

The Screen/Door

The Ark of the Covenant

The Fence

Bronze Altar

Golden Candlestick

Court of the Tabernacle

Altar of Incense

Veil

The Gate

Holy of Holies

Bronze Laver

Holy Place

Table of Shewbread

1. After leaving Egypt, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and very detailed instructions in order to  the Tabernacle.
2. The Tabernacle offers us a 'blueprint' or 'pattern' that reveals  toward us through the life of Jesus Christ.
3. The 'earthly' Tabernacle is but a '' of the one in Heaven.
4. , The 'fence' separated the Tabernacle from the outside  world.
5. The only way into the Courtyard was through a series of curtains called the .
6. Animal sacrifices were offered on the Bronze Altar and the  were sprinkled on the four brass horns by the attending priests.
7. Failure to wash their hands and feet at the Bronze Laver (prior to entering the Holy Place), the priests would face  if they enter the room.
8. From the outside, the Tabernacle looked dull and  (the badger's skin). But when the priests moved inside the Holy Place, they saw a rich variety of colors and furniture overlaid with .
9. The  was the only light source inside the Holy Place.
10. As the High Priest entered the  on the Day of Atonement, he offered up the sins of the people to God by sprinkling the blood of the sacrificed lamb on top of the .
11. What are the three items inside the Ark of the Covenant?

'Contemplationitis': What is the significance of the two golden cherubim above the Ark?

# No Dark Clouds - Educational Study Guides

©2018 R.W. Nelson

www.nodarkclouds.com

SG8

The 'Beatitudes' of Jesus

SG8

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them....”

Matthew 5:1,2

After Jesus assembles His team of twelve disciples, He delivers a powerful discourse that Christian leaders have labelled the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (Matthew 5-7). The Lord starts His teaching by saying ‘Blessed are the ....’ eight times. These ‘Blessed’ statements have come to be known as the ‘Beatitudes.’ The Latin noun ‘*beatitudo*’ describes a state of being ‘blessed’ and the Greek word for ‘blessed’ is ‘*makarioi*’, meaning ‘happy,’ with the implication of having a quality of life of happiness.

At first glance, it may be possible to acknowledge how simple, beautiful, and ‘religious’ the Beatitudes appear to be. However, when a person attempts to put the principles they set forth into practice, there is one thing that soon becomes a realization – we (the natural man) would struggle enormously in attempting to fulfill them.

At face value, it also might be possible to completely misunderstand the message of the Beatitudes. To some, these proverb type statements might mean poor people are very rich; sad people are doing great; weak people are actually strong; losers are the real winners.

To understand them we must understand the mind of the Teacher. To do that, we need to have the “mind of Christ,” (*1 Corinthians 2:16*). The Beatitudes are not so much a list of guidelines to follow as they are a description of the kind of person who is living a ‘Christlike’ lifestyle. We are not meant to practice the Beatitudes – we are meant to become them, and that takes a lifetime of spiritual maturity. When we get to the point in our lives that we look at the ‘Beatitudes’ using a lens directed towards God – and not necessarily just toward the people around us, their meaning becomes more focused. In other words, ‘Blessed are the ..... towards God.’

Key points to consider:

- The Beatitudes: emphasis → being not doing
- The Beatitudes: meant to be → Godward not ‘man-ward’
- The Beatitudes: not based on rules → based on a Person
- The Beatitudes: impossible for us → possible with Christ

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” Matthew 5:3*

In human terms, being poor is the opposite of being prosperous. In this life being poor might mean living in poverty with very little possessions. However, looking Godward, Jesus was instructing that it is fundamental for each of us to remember that we are all ‘poor and destitute’ spiritually compared to a holy God. It is only by His grace that we are saved (*Ephesians 2:8,9*). Pride, stubbornness, false self-confidence, all hinder us from understanding that we (as humans) are very poor spiritually. For those who become ‘poor in spirit’ we will obtain an inheritance based upon the riches of God. We are heirs in the kingdom. (*Romans 8:15-17*)

*“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4*

The word Jesus selects for mourn describes a grief too deep to be concealed. This Beatitude is not necessarily referring to weeping because of death, tragedy, or calamity, though the Greek word (*penthountes*) used in this passage means ‘to mourn the dead’. Looking Godward, it is when we come to Him genuinely sorry for our sinfulness that we ‘weep’ in repentance and turn back to God. For those who spiritually ‘mourn’ it will be God who comforts them. God blesses the repentant heart (*Psalms 30:4,5*) and His forgiveness is readily available because of the cross of Christ. To repent means to ‘turn around remorsefully’ not just feel sorry for sin. Those who ‘mourn’ over sin are the ones experiencing God’s comfort.

*“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5*

First of all, meekness does not mean weakness. Moses, a conquering general and leader of Israel was called meek. Jesus even referred to Himself as ‘meek and lowly of heart,’ (*Matthew 11:29*). In ancient times it was a word ascribed to a wild horse that had been trained. In other words, living a ‘controlled life’. Impulsiveness, acting rash, being extreme, making quick decisions in anger, all have significant downturns. Looking Godward, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is having self-control (*Galatians 5:22*). It will be those living a ‘controlled’ (balanced, disciplined, and gentle) lifestyle that will inherit the earth.

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” Matthew 5:6*

People hunger and strive for riches, power, gold medals, large mansions, and countless other ‘earthly’ rewards. Yet many times they are not satisfied and content when they achieve them. Such things are all temporary. Looking Godward, those who have a hunger (deep desire) and thirst (seeking to be quenched) for righteousness will

be satisfied. Righteousness of God means ‘rightness-with-God’. Those who thirst for the ‘Living Water’ (*John 4:10*) and hunger for the ‘Bread of Life’ (*John 6:35*) will be the ones content and satisfied in life. God will satisfy us because Christ became sin that we may become the righteousness of God (*2 Corinthians 5:21*). God’s satisfaction towards us is limitless and it is eternal. God’s satisfaction ‘list’ will include things like His peace, love, and joy.

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Matthew 5:7*

It is human nature to be selfish. We live in a world with the terminal illness of selfishness. Even the word ‘sin’ has “I” in the center of it. The Greek word for merciful – ‘*eleemon*’ is an adjective meaning ‘being actively compassionate.’ Looking Godward, Jesus’ entire ministry was about showing compassion and love (*Matthew 14:14*). He healed continually, fed thousands, and rose the dead because of His compassion. Jesus as our example did not speak mercy, He showed and acted mercy. Jesus is giving instruction here to His followers that we are called to be merciful and compassionate servants, putting the needs of others before our own needs (*Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 6:7*).

Showing mercy can be difficult at times, that is why we need to walk in the power of Christ. Being merciful involves forgiving others, helping those in need, performing acts of kindness – living compassion. Mercy sees genuine hurts and mercy gives genuine cures. The promise here is that God will show mercy and compassion to those who live it (in this life and the next).

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8*

Pure gold (24 karat gold) can only be obtained by purifying it with intense heat. By using fire, the unwanted metal and mineral impurities are burnt up leaving only the gold. The Greek word ‘*pur*’ actually means ‘fire or flame.’ *Hebrews 12:14* reminds us of a sobering reality: without holiness no one will see the Lord. Looking Godward, He sees our contaminated and impure hearts through the lens covered by ‘the blood of Jesus’ so to speak (*1 John 2:1,2*).

By heart, the Bible is referring to the center of our being – our will, mind, emotions, thoughts, and soul. Jesus is mandating that His followers need to live and pursue ‘daily’ holiness. One must be profoundly honest to be pure in heart. In this life it is possible to be ‘purified’ from envy, lust, hatred, and every other form of sin and stand cleansed before God via daily confession and devotion to God (*1 John 1:9*). As we draw near to God, He will draw near to us because striving to be pure in heart involves serving and pleasing God.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9*

- *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.” Rom. 12:18*
- *“Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance.” 2 Thessalonians 3:16*
- *“Pursue peace with all men.” Hebrews 12:14*

The world is very deficient and lacking when it comes to peace. From wars to arguments to conflicts, peace is absent. However, the directive here by Jesus to His disciples are for us to be peacemakers. Peacemakers end conflicts, they mediate with the love of Christ, and attempt to unify. A peacemaker will have the peace of God and ‘thrown’ into a world of strife. We are called to be God’s ‘go-betweens’ settling quarrels and conflict that tear people apart.

Looking Godward, when we receive Christ into our lives, we receive peace with God. *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Romans 5:1).* But just having peace with God does not always mean that we will always have the peace of God. Only a person who has peace within his heart can make peace. The result of peacemaking is to be called a ‘son’ of God. Jesus as THE ‘Son of God’ promoted peace but He was rejected by many. Those who promote peace as ‘sons of God’ will face rejection also.

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 5:10*

In a study of the Greek word used here for persecuted – ‘*dioko*’, Strong’s Concordance and Greek lexicons define the word as: *to drive away; to pursue in a hostile manner; to suffer on account of something; to harass; to trouble; to be mistreated.*

The goal of every follower of Christ is not persecution, but sometimes it is the result. This Beatitude confirms that the kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who suffer for the sake of righteousness; not those who are guilty of wrong-doing. As we mature in Christ and apply the seven previous Beatitudes to our lives, then we can expect persecution. Jesus was misunderstood by His own family; His hometown rejected Him; He was persecuted by the religious leaders; He was betrayed by a disciple; He was condemned by the government; He was falsely accused.

The blessings of God are poured out to those who are persecuted and have suffered for serving Jesus. In this we are to rejoice because the Kingdom of God belongs to them. If you are shamed, ridiculed, or mistreated for standing up for Jesus, Bible doctrine and teachings, or the Christian lifestyle, it will be God who will honor you in the kingdom of Heaven.

## The Beatitudes of Jesus

1. After Jesus assembles His team of twelve disciples, He delivers a powerful discourse that Christian leaders have labelled the ‘  ’.
2. The Lord starts His teaching by saying ‘Blessed are the .....’  times. These ‘Blessed’ statements have come to be known as the ‘  ’.
3. The Beatitudes are not so much a list of  to follow as they are a description of the kind of person who is living a ‘  ’ lifestyle.
4. Jesus was instructing us to remember that we are all ‘  and destitute’ spiritually compared to a holy God.
5. Looking Godward, it is when we come to Him  sorry for our sinfulness that we ‘  ’ in repentance and turn back to God.
6. Those who ‘mourn’ over sin are the ones experiencing God’s .
7. Looking Godward, one of the fruits of the Spirit is having  (*Gal 5:22*). It will be those living a ‘controlled’ lifestyle that will  the earth.
8. Looking Godward, those who have a  (deep desire) and  (seeking to be quenched) for righteousness will be satisfied. Righteousness of God means ‘rightness-with-God.’
9. The Greek word for merciful – ‘*eleemon*’ is an adjective meaning ‘being  compassionate.’
10. Jesus is giving instruction to His followers that we are called to be merciful and compassionate servants, putting the needs  before our own needs.

11. By heart, the Bible is referring to the  of our being – our will, mind, emotions, thoughts, and soul.

12. A peacemaker will have the peace of God and ‘thrown’ into a world of

13. Looking Godward, when we receive Christ into our lives we receive peace  God.

14. The goal of every follower of Christ is not persecution, but sometimes it is the

15. If you are shamed, ridiculed, or mistreated for standing up for Jesus, Bible doctrine and teachings, or the Christian lifestyle, it will be God who  in the kingdom of Heaven.

‘Contemplationitis’: Memorize one of the eight Beatitudes. Explain why?

# No Dark Clouds - Personal Application Lesson

©2018 R.W. Nelson

www.nodarkclouds.com

PA4

## When Really Bad Things Happen

PA4

*“Who am I? Why am I not normal like the kids you teach? They have a home, a family, and no scars.”*

*Before answering, Mishea silently moves one of her hands back and forth in the water of the pool. Finally, she looks up and addresses the boy. “First of all, you need to be honest with yourself. You are not the son of Leonidas. Do you remember anything about your real parents?”*

*Wiping away the tears from his face, the boy responds, “I was told that I was sold as a slave and that my parents were slaves. All I really know is that I was raised with beggars and crippled kids. I escaped one night from the caretakers and I have been on my own now for a long time. My only real friends are Aditya, Scooter, and Baa-Foo.”*

*“Second of all,” Mishea continues, “you must confront the fact that what has already happened cannot be changed. You can only change the present and the future.”*

*“But why did this happen to me?” the boy asks sincerely. “Does God hate me? Is He punishing me?”*

*“I believe that the Hebrew God is the true and Almighty One God. You cannot see Him, but He can see you. You may feel that no one loves you or cares about you in this world – but He loves you and knows who you are. We may not understand why things happen the way they do, but He is the all-knowing God.”*

*Beggar Boy and Mishea, No Dark Clouds, Chapter 10*

There are many examples of bad things happening in life such as a tornado ripping through a town, having cancer, dying unexpectedly, terrible accidents, financial ruin, and many more. If someone blames God for these, how would you respond to them?

According to 2 Thessalonians 2:7, iniquity (evil, sin, tragedy, lawlessness) is considered a mystery. We will never fully understand the depths of this but there are some Biblical truths that we can be certain of:

- Evil does not come from God nor can we blame Him for all the evils in the world. Evil comes from Satan and it entered our world when he deceived Adam and Eve (original sin, Genesis Ch. 3). Original sin caused chaos and pain to enter our world (Romans 8:19-22), which includes diseases, natural disasters, and death. These can happen to anyone, even those who love God.
- Someday, evil will be banished entirely and cast “into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” (Matthew 25:41).
- Until then (the ‘Lake of Fire’), we can have the assurance that God promises to be with all of those who belong to Christ in times of turmoil, tragedy, disaster and calamity.

Sometimes bad things happen because we make wrong choices. If we burn our hand on a hot stove, it is not God’s fault. Sometimes bad things happen because we fail to act or refuse to do something. Sometimes bad things happen from the choice of others such as a drunk driver causing a serious car accident. God does sometimes stop bad things from happening. However, original sin is also the ‘curse of creation.’ A ‘curse’ that has been with us for all of human history.

### Scripture Nuggets

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:3-5

“For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” James 1:2,3

“And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18

“Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.” Psalm 37:4,5

In times of great tragedy or very difficult times, which of the above mentioned Scripture Nuggets could you use to bring comfort. Explain.

*“But why did this happen to me?” the boy asks sincerely. “Does God hate me? Is He punishing me?”*

How would you respond to Beggar Boy if you were the one being asked?

When Jesus went to the cross, He nailed sin on it. This includes all of the ‘curses of creation;’ all of the sicknesses, all of the pain, sufferings, and tragedies. God through Christ has provided a way for us to be free from these curses.

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us...”  
Galatians 3:13

“I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Galatians 2:20

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away...” Revelation 21:1

Tenth Plague/Passover	Exodus Chapter 11-13
The Beatitudes	Matt 5:3-12
Jesus heals the servant	Matt 8:5-13 Luke 7:1-17
Jesus heals paralyzed man	Matt 9:1-8 Mark 2:1-12 Luke 5:17-26
Jesus blesses the children	Matt 19:13-15 Mark 10:13-16 Luke 18:15-17
Jesus heals young blind man	John 8:12-19; Chapter 9
Upper Room (Last) Supper	Matt 26:20-29 Mark 14:17-25 Luke 22:14-23 John 13:18-30
Washing Disciples' feet	Luke 22:7-18,24 John 13:1-17
Jesus and Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1-10
Cleansing the Temple	Matt 21:12-16,23-46 Mark 11:15-19,27-33; 12:1-12 Luke 19:45-48; 20:1-19
Garden of Gethsemane	Matt 26:36-56 Mark 14:32-50 Luke 22:39-53 John 18:1-12
Jesus before Caiaphas	Matt 26:57-75 Mark 14:53-72 Luke 22:54-71 John 18:13-27
Jesus before Pilate	Matt 27:2 Mark 15:1-20 Lk 23:1-25 Jn 18:28-40; 19:1-16
Jesus before Herod Antipas	Luke 23:7-15
Mishea reading prophecy	Isaiah Ch. 53
Crucifixion	Matt 27:31-53 Mark 15:20-38 Lk 23:26-46 John 19:16-30
The Resurrection	Matt 28:1-4,11-15 Mark 16:1-8 Luke 24:1-12 John 20:1-18
Emmaus Road	Luke 24:13-33
Jesus appears to Thomas	Luke 24:33-48 John 20:19-29
Jesus – Sea of Galilee	John 21:1-22
Ascension of Jesus	Luke 24:50-53

## Evangel-Topic #1

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school.  
Today we read about a group of beggars in Biblical Jerusalem who were begging for money. But all of the money was turned over to a cruel taskmaster. He kept all of their earnings. Do you think that could really happen?

## Evangel-Topic #2

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today one of the characters was reading about Jesus from the Bible to a beggar boy. But the passage she read was written 700 years before his time. What do you think about that?

## Evangel-Topic #3

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today a young blind, mute boy passes away. An angel comes into the room and escorts the boy into heaven. A woman is waiting for the boy to enter heaven and it is his mother. Do you think it really happens this way?

## Evangel-Topic #4

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read about an elderly woman who approaches a beggar boy in the street. It turns out that this elderly person is actually an angel from heaven. In the Bible, Hebrews 13:2 tells us that we may entertain angels without even knowing it. Do you think that is really possible?

## Evangel-Topic #5

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read about a Roman leader who has his hands on Jesus' shoulders with blood from Jesus falling on his hands. But every time the Roman washed his hands, he was telling everyone that the blood was not washing off. Do you think that could really happen?

## Evangel-Topic #6

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read that when Jesus died, the characters who were there saw a fissure break apart a large rock and broke apart the ground all the way to the Jewish Temple, then ripped apart a curtain called the Veil. Do you think that is what really happened?

## Evangel-Topic #7

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read about Roman soldiers and Jewish leaders arguing inside the empty tomb of Jesus. They seemed to be very afraid. The priests offered the soldiers money to be silent. Do you think it really happened that way?

## Evangel-Topic #8

No Dark Clouds ©2018

We are reading a novel in my class at school. Today we read about the main characters watching Jesus ascend to Heaven. They saw angels, a large city in the sky and Jesus disappearing with them in a cloud. Do you think that really happened?

# Scripture Nuggets

Scripture(s):		SG#	or	PA#
Key Concepts / Themes				
Commands To Obey				
Promises To Claim				
Actions To Take				
Things To Avoid				
Sins To Rebuke				
Chronology/ Historical Context				

Summary / Reflection / Notes:

---



---



---



---



---



---

Scripture(s):		SG#	or	PA#
Key Concepts / Themes				
Commands To Obey				
Promises To Claim				
Actions To Take				
Things To Avoid				
Sins To Rebuke				
Chronology/ Historical Context				

Summary / Reflection / Notes:

---



---



---



---



---



---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Scene/Chapter Plot Summary:

(circle one) I really liked..... I disliked .....

Reaction(s) /Reflection(s):

Discussion Question for the class/group:

I predict the following will happen:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Scene/Chapter Plot Summary:

(circle one) I really liked..... I disliked .....

Reaction(s) /Reflection(s):

Discussion Question for the class/group:

I predict the following will happen:

# No Dark Clouds Author's Bio

First written as a motion picture script while living in India observing beggar children for two years, then subsequently a church musical, No Dark Clouds has now been penned as a unique Christian fiction by R. W. Nelson. Performances spanned the nation from Off-Broadway – to TBN Studios, Irving TX – to Los Angeles.

Born in Texas, R.W. received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Texas A&M University and his Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies with a cognate in Media Management from Regent University, and the Christian Broadcasting Network, Virginia Beach, VA.

As the former president of *People To People Productions* and *New Life Films*, R.W. was active in production and distribution in the Christian film industry. An ordained Southern Baptist minister, his first copyrighted publication was entitled A Case for Salvation. He then wrote numerous laymen Bible college courses including, *Spiritual Warfare; Old Testament Survey; New Testament Survey; Romans; the Minor Prophets*; among others.

R.W. holds two certified California teaching credentials and taught special education for almost two decades at the middle school level, and is the recipient of two Digital Voices Awards® for the video productions, ‘*An Emerson to Einstein Silent Movie*’ and ‘*Mummy Math*.’

He is the creator and writer of his daughter’s globally experienced internet youth Bible course, A-Z Scripture Memory, (*a-zscripturememory.com*) and was the creator and host of the international radio program, ‘*Bible School of the Air*,’ featuring audio cassette courses such as, ‘*Experiencing God’s Peace, Love, and Joy*,’ and ‘*A Crumbling Tower*.’

Finally, the above mentioned ‘life-experiences’ have culminated, not only in writing No Dark Clouds as a novel, but using those valuable teaching experiences by creating No Dark Clouds - The Thematic Unit Companion, for the religious, church, and home-school educational classroom.

Visit [www.rwnelson-author.com](http://www.rwnelson-author.com) for media/press kit; official and voluntary reviews; plus more information, or contact [admin@rwnelson-author.com](mailto:admin@rwnelson-author.com)